

Five Complete Stories

# THE COSMOPOLITAN

MARCH, 1905

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By THE EARL OF RANFURLY

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Men Who Marry and Men  
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The Empire of Rothschild

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*Designed by*

*Frederic A. Stoddard*

"DOCTOR PALTRAVI WAVED AWAY  
THE MEDICINE, AND SAT UP IN  
BED. 'DID YOU SAY,' HE  
CRIED, 'THAT SHE IS  
GROWING OLD?'"

## THE LADY IN THE BOX.

BY FRANK R. STOCKTON

JOHN GAYTHER was busy putting the finishing touches to a bed in which he intended to sow his latest planting of bush-beans, or string-beans, or snaps, as they are called in different parts of the country.

These were some very choice seeds which had been sent to him by a friend abroad, and consequently John wanted to get them into the ground as soon as possible.

But when he saw, entering the garden,

not only the Daughter of the House, but also her mother, the Mistress of the House, a sudden conviction shot through him that there would be no beans planted that morning.

The elder of these two ladies was not very elderly, and she was handsomer than her daughter; she was pleasant to look upon and pleasant to talk to, but she had a mind of her own; John Gayther had found that out long before. She was very fond of flowers and there were many beds



of them, which were planted and treated according to her directions and fancies. These beds did not, in fact, form part of the gardener's garden; they belonged to her and nobody else had anything to say about them. Many things grew here which were not often found in gardens. Weeds, for instance, from foreign countries, and some from near-by regions, which the Mistress of the House thought might be made to grow into comely blossoms if they were given the chance. Here she picked and planted and put in and pulled out, according to her own will, and her pulling out was often done after a fashion which would have discouraged any other gardener than John Gayther. When she found her plants were growing too thickly, or that some luxurious flowers were trespassing upon some tender weed from afar, out would come the great clusters of blossoms with their stalks and roots, to be thrown upon the path and afterward quietly gathered up by John Gayther, who had long since learned that the Mistress of the House knew what she wanted, and that it would be entirely useless for him to trouble himself about her methods.

The gardener was not altogether happy when he saw these two ladies coming toward him; he knew they were coming for a story, for when the elder lady came to the garden it was not her habit to bring her daughter with her, nor was either of them likely, on ordinary occasions, to walk along in a straightforward way, loitering neither here nor there; their manner and their pace denoted a purpose.

John Gayther had never dug into a garden-bed as earnestly and anxiously as he now dug into his mind. These ladies were coming for a story. The younger one had doubtless told her mother that there had been stories told in the garden, and now another one was wanted, and it was more than likely that he was expected to tell it. But he did not feel at all easy about telling a story to the Mistress of the House. He knew her so well and the habits of her mind, that he was fully assured if his fancies should blossom too luxuriantly, she would ruthlessly pull them up and throw them on the path. Still, he believed she would like fancies,

and highly colored ones, but he must be very careful about them. They must be harmonious; they must not interfere with each other; they might be rare and wonderful, but he must not give them long Latin names which meant nothing to the untechnical mind.

One thing which troubled him was the difficulty of using the first person when telling a story to the Mistress of the House. He could tell his stories best in that fashion, but he did not believe that his hearer would be satisfied with them; she would not be likely to give them enough belief to make them interesting. He had a story all ready to tell to the Daughter of the House, for he had been sure she would want one, some day or other, and this one, told in a manner which would please him, he thought would please her; but it was very different with her mother. He must be careful.

When the two ladies came to the bed where the beans were to be planted, the gardener found that he had not mistaken their errand.

"John," said the Mistress of the House, "I hear you tell a very good story, and I want you to tell me one. Where is there a shady place where we can sit?"

There was the same shady place there had been before, and there they went and sat, but there was no need now of John Gayther's making any pretense of trimming pea-sticks.

"I have a story," said he, his stool at a respectful distance from the two ladies.

"Is it about yourself?" asked the Daughter of the House.

"No, miss, not this time," he answered.

"I am sorry for that," she said, "for I like to think of people doing the things they tell about. But I suppose we can't have that always."

"Oh, no," said her mother, "and if John has an interesting story about anybody else, let him tell it."

The gardener began promptly. "The name of this story is 'The Lady in the Box,'" said he, "and with the exception of the lady, the principal personage in it was a young man, who lived in Florence toward the end of the last century."

"And how did you come to know the



*Design by Vincent A. Strohoda.*

"THE GARDENER BEGAN PROMPTLY."

story?" asked the Daughter of the House. "Has it ever been told before?"

Now there was need to assert himself, if John Gayther did not wish to lose grace

with his hearers, and he was equal to the occasion. "It has never been printed," said he quietly, but boldly; "it came to me in the most straightforward way, step by step."



"Very good," said the Mistress of the House; "I like a story to come in that way."

"The young man, whose name was Jaqui," continued John Gayther, "was of good parts, but not in very good circumstances. He was a student of medicine, and the assistant of a doctor, which means that he did all the hard work, such as attending to the shop, mixing the drugs, and even going out to see very poor patients in bad weather. Jaqui's employer—master, in fact—was Doctor Torquino, an elderly man of much reputation in his town. The doctor expected Jaqui to be his successor, and as the years went on the younger man began to visit patients in good circumstances who fell sick in fine weather. At last Doctor Torquino made a bargain with Jaqui, by which the latter was to pay certain sums of money to the old man's heirs, and then the stock and good will of the establishment were formally made over to him, and shortly afterward the old doctor died. But before his death he told Jaqui everything that it was necessary for him to know in regard to the property and the business to which he had succeeded.

"Torquino's house was a very good one, consisting of three floors. On the ground floor were the shop, the private office and the living-rooms; the old doctor and Jaqui lodged on the third floor. The second floor was very handsomely furnished, but was not then occupied, at least not in the ordinary way. It belonged to Doctor Paltravi, the old doctor's former partner, a somewhat younger man, and married. He had been greatly attached to his wife and had furnished these rooms to suit her fancy. He was a scientific man, and much more devoted to making curious experiments than he was to the ordinary practice of medicine and surgery. In a small room on this floor, at the very back of the house, was Signora Paltravi, in a box."

"Was she dead?" exclaimed the Daughter of the House.

"It was believed by Doctor Torquino that she was not, but he could not be sure of it."

"And her husband?" asked the elder lady—"was he dead?"

"No," replied the gardener; "at least, there was no reason to suppose so. About forty years before the time of this story he had left Florence, and this was the way of it: Signora Paltravi was a young and handsome woman, but her health was not as satisfactory as it might have been, for she had a tendency to fall into swoons and remain so, sometimes for many hours, coming out of a trance as lively as before she went into it. Now this disposition had a powerful effect upon her husband, and he studied her very closely, with an interest which almost devoured the other powers of his mind. He experimented upon her, and became so expert that he could not only bring her out of her trances whenever he chose, but he could keep her in them, and this he did, sometimes as long as a week, in order to prove to himself that he could do it."

"Shame upon him!" exclaimed the Daughter of the House.

"Never mind," said her mother; "let John go on."

"Well," continued the gardener, "the old doctor told Jaqui a great many things about Paltravi and his wife, and how she came to be at that time in the box. Paltravi had conceived a great scheme, one which he had believed might have immense influence on the happiness of the world. He determined that when his wife next went into a trance he would try to keep her so for fifty years, and then revive her, in the midst of her youth and beauty, to enjoy the world as she should find it."

"There was nothing new about that," said the Mistress of the House; "it is a very old story and has been told again and again."

"That is very true, madam," answered John Gayther, "and Doctor Paltravi had heard many such stories, but most of them were founded upon traditions and myths and the vaguest kind of hearsay, and some were no more than the fancies of story-tellers. But the doctor wanted to work on solid and substantial ground, and he believed that his wife's exceptional opportunities should not be sacrificed."

"Sacrificed!" exclaimed the Daughter of the House; "I like that!"

"Of course, I will not attempt to explain

the doctor's motives, or try to excuse him," said the gardener; "I can only tell what he did. He protracted one of his wife's trances, and when it had continued for a month he determined to keep it up for half a century, if it could be done, and he went earnestly to work for the purpose. The old doctor had not altogether approved of his partner's action, but I don't believe he disapproved very much, for he also possessed a good deal of the spirit of scientific investigation.

"When everything had been arranged and the lady had been placed in a large and handsome box, which had been designed with great care by her husband and constructed under his careful supervision, she was carried into the little room which had been her boudoir, and there her husband watched and guarded her for nearly a year. In

all that time there was not the slightest change in her, so far as mortal eye could see, but there came a change over her husband. He grew uneasy and restless, and could not sleep at night, and at last he told Doctor Torquino he should have to go away; he could not stay any longer and see his beautiful wife lying motionless before him. The desire to

revive her had become so great that he found it impossible to withstand it, and, therefore, in the interest of science and for the advantage of the world, he must put it out of his power to interfere with the success of his own great experiment.

"He wrote down on parchment every-thing that was necessary for the person to know who had charge of this great treas-

ure, and he made Doctor Torquino swear to guard and to protect Signora Paltravi for forty-nine years, if he should live so long, and if he did not, that he would deliver his charge into the hands of some worthy and trustworthy person. If, at the end of the lady's half-century of inanimation, Paltravi should not make his appearance, on account of having died, for nothing but death could keep him away, then the person in charge of the lady



*Drawn by Vincent A. Siskind.*

"HE SANK INTO A CHAIR."

was to animate her in the manner which was fully and minutely described on the parchment. Paltravi then departed, and since that time nothing had been heard of him.

"When Jaqui came into possession of Doctor Torquino's house, he felt he only owned the contents of two floors, and that the second floor, especially the little room in the rear, was a great responsibility



which he did not desire at all, and of which he would have rid himself if Doctor Torquino had not made him swear that he would guard it sacredly for the ten years which still remained of the intended period of inanimation.

"He had seen the lady in the box, for the old doctor had taken him into her room, and they had removed the top of the box and had looked at her through the great plate of glass which covered her. She was very beautiful and richly dressed, and seemed as if she were merely asleep. But in spite of her beauty and the interest which attached to her, he wished very much somebody else had her to take care of. Such thoughts, however, were of no use; she went with the business and the property, and he had nothing to say about it.

"Jaqui did not have a very good time after the old doctor's death," continued John Gayther; "it was not even as good a time as he had expected it to be. For nearly fifteen years he had been living in that house with Doctor Torquino and in all that time the lady in the box had never troubled him; but now she did trouble him. Various legal persons came to attend to the transfer of the property, and although they found everything all straight and right, so far as the old doctor's possessions were concerned, they were not so well satisfied in regard to the contents of the second floor, some of them thinking the government should have something to say in regard to the property of a man who had been away for forty years, but as Paltravi had made Torquino his heir when he left Florence, and Jaqui had the papers to show, this matter was settled. But for all that, Jaqui was troubled, and it was about the box of the lady. It was such a peculiar-looking box that several questions were asked as to its contents, and when Jaqui boldly asserted that it contained anatomical preparations, he was asked why it happened to be in that handsome little room. But by the help of money and his good reputation, Jaqui got rid of the legal people.

"But after this he had to face the neighbors. These heard of the box, and it revived memories, in the minds of some of the elders, of strange stories about Doctor

Paltravi. His wife had died several times, according to some of them, and she had at last been carried to her native town in Lombardy for burial, but nobody knew the name of that town, and there were one or two persons who said she never had been buried, but that her husband had preserved her skeleton and had had it gilded, he was so very fond of her. Jaqui had a good deal of trouble with these people, who had never dared to trouble old Doctor Torquino with their idle curiosity, for he was a man with a high temper, and would stand no meddling.

"But when the neighbors had ceased to talk, at least to him, there came a third class of troublers, worse than either of the others. These were some scientific people, who long ago had heard of the experiment Doctor Paltravi had been making with his wife. Several of these wrote to Jaqui, and two of them came to see him. These insisted on looking at the lady in the box and Jaqui was obliged to show her. The two scientists were very much interested, extremely so, but they did not in the least believe the lady was alive. They considered the beautiful figure to be the most admirable specimen of the preservation of the human body after death that they had ever seen, and that Paltravi was entitled to the greatest credit for the success of his experiment. They were anxious to be informed of the methods by which this wonderful result had been obtained. But Jaqui firmly informed them that this was now his secret and his property, and he would not divulge it. The scientists acknowledged the justice of this position and did not urge their point, but each of them, when he went away, resolved that in the course of a few years he would come back, and that if the body of the lady was still in good preservation he would buy it if he could. Jaqui might be poor by that time, or dead.

"Jaqui now thought his troubles were over, but he was mistaken. A new persecutor appeared, who belonged to a fourth class, fortunately not a very large one. This person was a young man who was not only a fool but a poet."

"Unfortunate creature!" exclaimed the Mistress of the House.

"I don't think so, madam," said John



Gayther; "he was very happy. It was the people with whom he associated who were unfortunate. This young man, whose name was Florino, lived in Milan, and it would have been much better for Jaqui if he had lived in Patagonia. By great bad luck he had overheard one of the scientists who had visited Jaqui talking about what he had seen at his house, and the poet instantly became greatly interested in the story. He plied the learned man with all manner of questions, and very soon made up his mind that he would go to Florence to see the lady in the box. He believed she would make a most admirable subject for a poem from his pen.

"When Florino presented himself to Jaqui, he came as the general of an army who settles down before a town to invest it, and to capture it, if he shall live long enough. At first Jaqui tried to turn him away in the usual manner, but the poet was not to be turned away. He had no feelings which could be hurt, and Jaqui was afraid to hurt his body on account of the police. The young man begged, he argued, he insisted, he persisted. All he wanted was to see, just once, the face of the beautiful lady who had been so wonderfully preserved. He visited the unfortunate Jaqui by day and by night, and when at last Florino solemnly promised that if he should be given one opportunity of seeing the lady he would go away and never trouble Jaqui any more, the latter concluded that to agree to this proposition would be the best way to get rid of the youth, and so consented to allow him to gaze upon the face which forty years before had been animated by the soul of Signora Paltravi.

"When the upper part of the lid of the box had been removed and the face of the lady appeared under the plate of glass, the soul of the young poet, who tremblingly bent over it, was filled with rapturous delight. Never in his life had he seen anything so beautiful, and more than this, he declared he had never even dreamed of features so lovely. For a time it interested Jaqui to listen to the rhapsodies and observe the exaltation of the poet-fool, but he soon had enough of this amorous insanity, and prepared to close

the box. Then Florino burst into wild entreaties—only ten minutes more, five minutes, three minutes, anything. So it went on until the poet had been feasting his eyes on the lady for nearly half an hour. Then Jaqui forcibly put him out of the room, closed the box and locked the door.

"Florino had no more idea of keeping his word than he had of becoming a blacksmith. He persecuted Jaqui more than he had before, and when his solicitations to see the lady again were refused he went so far as to attempt to climb up to her window. Of course, Jaqui could have called in the aid of the police, but it would have made it unpleasant for him to bring the whole affair into court, and Florino knew this as well as he did. After a short time, the poet tried a new line of tactics, and endeavored to persuade Jaqui that it was his duty to revive the lady; when this idea once got well into the head of the young man, he became a worse lunatic than before. Jaqui attempted to reason with him, but Florino would listen to nothing he had to say and went on being a fool and a poet and a lover at the same time, and Jaqui began to be afraid that some day he would get into the room, break open the box, seize upon the sealed parchment which lay under the lid, and try to revive the lady himself.

"It is quite possible this might have happened, had not something very unexpected occurred: Doctor Paltravi came back to his old home. Jaqui recognized him immediately from the description which Torquino had given of him. He was now nearly seventy years old, but he was in good health and vigor, his tall form was still upright, and the dark eyes, which the old doctor had particularly described, were as bright and as piercing as ever they had been.

"He told Jaqui he had hoped to postpone the revival of his wife until the expiration of the fifty years, but that of late his resolution had been weakening. It had become very hard for him to think he must wait ten years more before he came back to his home and his wife. Science was a great thing, but the love of a man for a woman such as the one he loved, was still greater, and when he had heard of



the death of Doctor Torquino he quickly made up his mind that he would not leave his wife in the custody of any one but his old friend and partner. So here he was, fully resolved to lose no time in reviving his wife and in starting to spend his life here with her in their old home, so long as they might both survive.

"Jaqui was now a happy man. Here was the owner of the lady, ready to take her off his hands and relieve him of all the perplexing responsibilities and miseries which her possession had caused him. As he looked at the stalwart figure of the returned husband, it made him laugh to think of the fool-poet.

"Doctor Paltravi and Jaqui were both practical men, and that evening they laid out the whole plan for the revivification of the lady in the box. Jaqui was so glad to be rid of her that he willingly undertook to do anything to assist Paltravi in setting out on his new career of domestic happiness.

"It was agreed that it was most important that when she woke again to life, Signora Paltravi should not be too much surprised, and her husband did everything he could to prevent anything of the kind. He had her old bedroom swept and garnished and made to look as much as possible as it had been when she last saw it. Then he went into the town and was fortunate enough to engage a young girl as maid, who was the granddaughter of the woman who had been his wife's maid, forty years before. It was decided that this girl, having been well instructed as to what was expected of her, should be the first to see the lady when she should revive, and that after that, when it should be deemed a suitable moment, Jaqui should have an interview with her in the capacity of physician, and explain the state of affairs so that she should not be too greatly excited and shocked by the change in the appearance of her husband. Then, when everything had been made plain, Paltravi was to go to her."

"Those two were a couple of brave men," remarked the Mistress of the House.

"They were very fortunate men, I think," said her daughter. "What would I not give to be the first to talk with a woman who had slept for forty years!"

"Perhaps she is going to sleep indefinitely," answered the Mistress of the House, "but let John go on with his story."

"All these plans were carried out. The next day the lady was taken out of the box, removed to her own chamber and placed upon a couch. The garments she wore were just as fresh and well preserved as she was, and as Doctor Paltravi stood and looked at her, his heart swelling with emotion, he could see no reason why she should not imagine that she had fallen asleep forty minutes before instead of forty years. The two doctors went to work, speaking seldom and in whispers, their faces pale and their hearts scarcely beating, so intense was their anxiety regarding the result of this great experiment. Jaqui was almost as much affected as Doctor Paltravi, and, in fact, his fears were greater, for he was not supported by the faith of the other. He could not help thinking of what might follow if everything did not turn out all right.

"But there was no need of anxiety; in a little while respiration was established, the heart began to beat gently, the blood slowly circulated, there was a little quiver about the lips—Signora Paltravi was alive! Her husband, on his knees beside her, lifted his eyes to heaven, and then, his head falling forward, he sank upon the floor."

"Oh!" ejaculated the Daughter of the House, "I hope he did not die. That would have been good tragedy, but how dreadful!"

"No," answered the gardener, "he did not die, and Jaqui, his excitement giving him the strength of a giant, took the insensible man in his arms and carried him out of the room."

The Mistress of the House gave a little sigh of relief. "I am so glad he did," said she. "I was actually beginning to be afraid. I really do not want to be present when she first sees him."

John Gayther perfectly understood this remark, and took it to heart. It implied a little lack of faith in his dramatic powers, but it made things a great deal easier for him.

"Without reëntering the room," continued he, "Jaqui partly closed the door



and gazed at the lady through a little crack."

"I do not know about that," said the Mistress of the House; "he should have gone in boldly."

"Excuse me," said John Gayther, "but I think not. This was a very important moment, nobody knew what would happen; she should not be shocked by seeing a stranger, and at the same time the eye of a professional man was absolutely necessary."

"Signora Paltravi slightly moved and sighed, then she opened her eyes and gazed for a few minutes at the ceiling, after which she turned her head upon the cushion of the couch, and in a clear, soft voice called out, 'Rita!' This was the name of the girl now in waiting, as it had been the name of her grandmother, and she instantly appeared from the adjoining room. She had seen all that had happened and was trembling so much she could scarcely stand, but she was a girl of nerve, and approached and stood by her mistress. 'Rita,' said the lady, without looking at her, 'I am hungry; bring me some wine and a few of those cakes you bought yesterday.'

"Doctor Paltravi had remembered everything that had pleased his wife; he had thought of the little cakes and had scoured the town early in the morning to get some which resembled them; he knew her favorite wine and had given Rita her instructions. Without delay the maid brought the refreshments, and in a few minutes the lady was sitting on the couch, a glass of wine in her hand. 'Rita,' said she, after eating and drinking a little, 'you are dressed very awkwardly this morning. Have you been trying to make your own clothes?'

"The doctor had searched diligently in his wife's closets for some garments belonging to her former maid, and he had

thought he had succeeded in getting Rita to dress as her grandmother had dressed, but he did not remember these things as accurately as his wife remembered them. 'You know I do not like carelessness in dress,' continued Signora Paltravi, 'and now that I look at you more closely——' 'She is truly alive,' said Jaqui, 'and in full possession of her senses.' And with this he closed the door.

"When the doctor recovered, both he and Jaqui were very glad to take some wine, for they had been under a dreadful strain."

"*Had been!*" exclaimed the Mistress of the House, who understood the heart of woman, and knew very well that the great strain had not yet come. "But what happened next, John?"

"The next thing happened too soon," replied the gardener. "In less than fifteen minutes the maid came to the two doctors and told them her lady demanded to see her husband, and if he were not in the house he must be sent for immediately. This greatly disturbed Jaqui, and he turned pale

again. If he could have had his own way at that moment, he would have put the lady back in her box and locked the door of the little room. He did not feel ready to tell the story he had to tell, but there was no help for it; he must do it, and that immediately. 'Go in, Jaqui,' said Doctor Paltravi; 'prepare her mind as well as you can, and then I will see her.' 'Hurry, please, sir,' said the maid; 'she is very impatient, and I cannot explain to her.'"

"The quick temper of Signora Paltravi reminds me of Edmond About's story of 'The Man with the Broken Ear,'" said



Engraved by  
Vincent A. Spalding

"AND THEN HER HUSBAND WATCHED AND GUARDED  
HER FOR NEARLY A YEAR."



the Mistress of the House. "The hero of that story was a soldier who had been preserved in a dried condition for many years, and who proved to be a very bad subject when he had been dampened and revived."

"I have read that novel," said John Gayther, considerably to the surprise of both his hearers, "and it belongs to the same class as mine. Of course you know all stories are arranged in classes, but the one I am telling you is much more natural and true to life than the one written by the Frenchman."

"I am quite ready to believe that," said the Mistress of the House. "Now please go on."

The Daughter of the House did not say anything, but she looked very earnestly at the gardener; the conviction was forcing itself upon her that John Gayther himself had a story, and she hoped that some day she might hear it.

"Jaqui was very much surprised when he saw Signora Paltravi. He had seen her face so often that he was perfectly familiar with it, but now he found it changed. In color it was not as lifelike as it had been in the box. She was pale and somewhat excited. 'My maid tells me you are a doctor, sir,' said she, 'but why do you come to me? If I need a doctor and my husband is away, why is not Doctor Torquino here?' 'Madam,' said Jaqui, his voice faltering a little, 'you will excuse the intrusion of a stranger when I tell you that Doctor Torquino is dead.'"

"Rather abrupt," said the Mistress of the House.

"He could not help it, madam," said John Gayther; "it popped out of his head. But it did not matter; Signora Paltravi had a quick perception. 'Oh!' she exclaimed, 'and I not know it!' Then she stopped and looked steadfastly at Jaqui. 'I see,' she said, slowly, 'I have been in one of my trances.' Then she grew still paler. 'But my husband, he is not dead? Tell me, he is not dead?' she cried. 'Oh, no,' exclaimed Jaqui, 'he is alive, and well, and will be with you very soon.' Signora Paltravi's face lighted with an expression of great happiness, her color returned, and she looked almost as handsome as when she had been lying in the box. 'Blessed

be the Holy Mary!' said she; 'if he is well, it matters not what has happened. How long have I been in a trance?' 'I cannot say exactly,' replied Jaqui, very much afraid to speak the truth; 'in fact, I was not here when you went into it, but——'

"Oh, never mind, never mind," she exclaimed; "my husband will tell me everything. I would much rather he should do so. But what ugly-fashioned clothes you are wearing, sir! Does everybody dress in that way now, or is it only doctors? I am sure I must have been asleep for a good while, and that I shall see some wonderful things. It is quite delightful to think of it. I can scarcely wait until my husband comes. I want him to tell me everything."

"When the greatly relieved Jaqui returned with the news, he threw Doctor Paltravi into a state of rapture. His wife knew what had happened! She had not been shocked! She understood, and above everything else she longed to see him! After all these forty years he was now—this minute—to be with her again! She was longing to see him! With all the vigor of youth he bounded up the stairs. Now," said John Gayther, "we will pass over an interval of time."

"I think that will be very well indeed," replied the Mistress of the House.

"Not a long one, I hope," said her daughter, "for this is a breathless point in the story. I have worked it out in my own mind in three different ways already."

The gardener smiled with pleasure. He had a high regard for the mind of the Daughter of the House. "Well," said he, "the interval is very short; it is really not more than twenty minutes, but at the end of that brief space of time Jaqui was surprised to see Doctor Paltravi reënter the room he had so recently left in all the wild excitement of an expectant lover. But what a changed man he was! Pale, haggard, wild-eyed and aged, he sank into a chair, and covered his face with his hands."

"I was afraid of that! I was afraid of that!" exclaimed the Mistress of the House.

"And I, too," said her daughter, with tears in her eyes. "That was one of the

ways in which I worked it out, but it is too dreadful. John Gayther, don't you think you have made a mistake? If you were to consider it all carefully, don't you really believe it could not be that—at least not quite that?"

"I am sorry," said the gardener, "but I am sure this story could not have happened in any other way, and I think if you will wait until it is finished you will agree with me."

"For a time the distressed husband could not speak, and then in faltering tones he told

Jaqui what had fallen out. His wife had been so shocked and horrified at his appearance that she had come near fainting. What really made it worse was the fact that, although she did not say so, she did not regard him as some strange old man, but recognized him instantly. His form, his

features, his carriage, were

perfectly familiar to her. She had known them all in her young dark-haired husband of forty years before, and here was that same husband, gray-headed, gray-bearded, and repulsively old. She had turned away her head; she would not look at him. As soon as she could speak she had demanded to know how long she had been in her trance, and when the matter was explained her anger was unbounded.

"Doctor Paltravi never told Jaqui all that she said, but she must have used very severe language. She declared he had used her shamefully and wickedly in keep-

ing her asleep for so long and then waking her to be the wife of a miserable old man, just ready to totter into the grave. But she would not be his wife; she vowed she would have nothing to do with him. He had deserted her, he had treated her cruelly, and the Holy Father, the Pope, would look upon it in that light, and would separate her from him; and, with bitter reproaches, she had told him to go away and never to let her see him again."

"But, John," said the Mistress of the House, "I do not believe the Pope could

have separated them.

The Roman Catholic church does not sanction divorce."

"Not as a rule, madam," replied the gardener. "but I will touch on this point again. There was a good deal to be said on her side, it is true, but I am not going to take sides with any of the persons in my story. She had driven away the poor doctor, and declared

she would have nothing to do with him, and so the unhappy man told Jaqui he was going back to Milan, where he had been living, and would trouble his wife no more.

"Then up jumped Jaqui in a terrible state of mind. Was he never to get rid of this lady? He declared that he could not accept the responsibility. When she had been in the box it had been bad enough, but now it was impossible. He would go away to some place unknown, he would depart utterly, and leave everything behind him.



*Drawn by Vincent A. Strohman*

"NEVER IN HIS LIFE HAD HE SEEN ANY-  
THING SO BEAUTIFUL."



"But on his knees Doctor Paltravi implored Jaqui to stay where he was, and to protect his wife for a time, at least. He would send money, he would do everything he could, and perhaps, after a time, some arrangement could be made; but now he must go. He had been ordered to leave, and he must do so. It had not been two days since Paltravi and Jaqui had met, but already it seemed to them that they were old friends. Strange circumstances had bound them together, and Jaqui now found he could not refuse the charge which was thrust upon him, and Doctor Paltravi departed.

"Signora Paltravi did not allow her anger to deprive her of her opportunities. There were so many new things she wanted to see, that she set about seeing them with great earnestness and industry, and she enjoyed her new world very much indeed. The news of her revivification spread abroad rapidly, for such a thing could not be concealed, and many people came to see her. She was beautiful and popular, and adopted new fashions as soon as she learned them. Jaqui had nothing to say to all this; he had no right now to keep people from seeing her.

"Very soon there came to her the fool-poet. Now Jaqui began to hope. He had been assured by his priest that, under the circumstances, the church would dissolve this young lady's marriage with Paltravi, and if Florino would marry her, Jaqui might look forward to a peaceful life. Now, whether the priest had a right to say this, I will not take it on myself to say, but he did say it, and so Jaqui did not feel called upon to interfere with the courtship of the fool-poet. He decided that as soon as possible he would go away from that house. He had a dislike for houses with three floors, and his next habitation should be carefully selected; if so much as a preserved bug or a butterfly in a box should be found on the premises, that symbol of evil should be burnt, and its ashes scattered afar.

"Jaqui had every reason to hope; Florino literally threw himself at the feet of the fair Signora Paltravi, and she was delighted with him. He was somewhat younger than she, but that had been the case with her first lover and she had not

objected. The two young people got on famously together, although there was now a duenna as well as a maid on the second floor, and Jaqui was greatly comforted. He spent a good deal of his spare time going about Florence looking for a desirable house with two floors. The courtship went on merrily, and there was talk of the wedding, and while Jaqui could not help pitying the poor old man in Milan he could not altogether blame the gay young woman in Florence, who was now generally looked upon as a lady who had lost her husband.

"It was nearly three weeks after the lady had come out of her box when a strange thing happened: four days elapsed without Florino's coming to the house. Jaqui was greatly disturbed and nervous. Suppose the young man had found some other lady to love, or suppose his parents had shut him up! Such suspicions were very disquieting, and Jaqui went to see Florino. He found the fool-poet in a fit of the doleful dumps. At first the young man refused to talk, but when Jaqui pressed him he admitted that he had not quarreled with the lady; that she did not know why he was staying away; that he had received several notes from her, and that he had not answered them. Then Jaqui grew very angry, and half drew his sword. This was a matter in which he was concerned. The lady's husband had placed her in his charge, and he would not stand tamely by and see her deserted by her lover, who had given everybody reason to believe that he intended to make her his own.

"But Jaqui put back his sword, for the fool-poet showed no signs of fight, and then he used argument. Just as earnestly as he had formerly tried to keep these two apart, did he now endeavor to bring them together. But Florino would listen to no reason, and, at last, when driven to bay, he declared he would not marry an old woman; that Signora Paltravi had dozens of gray hairs on each temple, and there were several wrinkles at the corners of her eyes. He was a young man and wanted a young woman for his wife.

"Jaqui was utterly astounded by what he heard; his mind was suddenly per-



meated by a conviction which rendered him speechless. He rose, and without another word, he hurried home. As soon as he could, he made a visit to Signora Paltravi. He had not seen her for a week or more, and the moment his eyes fell upon her he saw that Florino was right; she was growing old! He spent some time with her, but as she did not allude to any change in herself, of course he did not, but just as he was leaving he made a casual remark about Florino. 'Oh, he has not been here for some time,' said the lady. 'I missed him at first, but now I am glad he does not come. He is very frivolous, and I have a small opinion of his poetry. I think most of it is copied, and he shows poor judgment in his selections.'

'That evening, sitting in his private room, Jaqui thought he saw through everything: upstairs, on the second floor, was a lady who was actually seventy-one years old. Her natural development had been arrested by artificial influences, but as these influences had ceased to operate, there could be no reason to doubt that nature was resuming her authority over the lady, and that she was doing her best to make up for lost time. Signora Paltravi appeared now to be about forty-five years old.'

'This is getting very curious, John,' said the Mistress of the House. 'I have often heard of bodies which, on being exhumed, after they had been buried a long time, presented a perfectly natural appearance, but which crumbled into dust when exposed to the air and light. Would not this lady's apparent youth have crumbled into dust, all at once, when it was exposed to light and air?'

'I cannot say, madam,' said the gardener, respectfully, 'what might have happened in other cases, but in this instance the life of youth remained for a good while, and when it did begin to depart the change was gradual.'

'You forget, mama,' said the younger lady, 'that this is real life, and that it is a story with one thing coming after another, like steps.'

'I did forget,' said the other, 'and I beg your pardon, John.'

The gardener bowed his head a little

and went on: 'Jaqui was greatly interested in this new development. He made frequent visits to Signora Paltravi, finding, to his surprise, that she was not the vain and frivolous woman he had supposed her to be, but was, in reality, sensible and intelligent. She talked very well about many things, and even took an interest in science. Jaqui lost all desire to put her back in her box, and spent the greater part of his leisure time in her company.'

At this the Mistress of the House smiled, but her daughter frowned.

'Of course,' continued the gardener, 'he soon fell in love with her.'

'Which was natural enough,' said the Mistress of the House.

'Whether it was natural enough or not,' cried her daughter, 'it was not right.'

John Gayther looked upon her with pride. He knew that in her fair young mind that which ought to be, entirely excluded those thoughts of what was likely to be, which came into the more experienced mind of her mother.

'But you see, miss,' said John Gayther, 'Jaqui was human. Here was a lady very near his own age, still beautiful, very intelligent, living in the same house with him, glad to see him whenever he chose to visit her. It was all as clear as daylight, and it was not long before he was in such a state of mind that he would have fallen upon Florino with a drawn sword if the fool-poet had dared to renew his addresses to Signora Paltravi.'

'I must say,' remarked the Mistress of the House, 'that although his action was natural enough, he was in great danger of becoming a prose-fool.'

'You are right, madam,' said the gardener, 'and Jaqui had some ideas of that kind himself, but they were of no use. The lady was uncommonly attractive now that her mind had come to the aid of her body. He knew that nature was still working hard to make this blooming middle-aged lady look like the old woman she really was, but love is a powerful antidote to reason, and this was the first time Jaqui had ever been in love. When he thought of it at all, he persuaded himself that it did not matter how old this lady might come to be, he would love



her all the same. In fact, he was sure that if she were to turn young again and become frivolous and beautiful, his love would not change. It was getting stronger and stronger every time he saw her."

"What I am thinking about," exclaimed the Daughter of the House, "is that poor old gentleman in Milan. No matter what the others were doing, or what they were thinking, they were treating him shamefully, and Jaqui was not his friend at all."

"You may be right," said her mother, "but don't you see, this is real life. You must not forget that, my dear."

John Gayther smiled and went on, and the young lady listened, although she did not approve. "Jaqui was a handsome man and could make himself very agreeable, and it is not surprising that Signora Paltravi became very much attached to him. He could not fail to see this, and as he was a man of method he declared to himself one evening that upon the next day, at the first moment he could find the lady alone, he would propose marriage to her. He had ceased to think about increase in age and all that. He was perfectly satisfied with her as she was, and he troubled his mind about nothing else.

"But, early the next morning, before he had a chance to carry out his plans, he received a letter from Doctor Paltravi, urging him to come immediately to Milan. The poor gentleman was sick in his bed, and greatly longed to see his friend Jaqui. The letter concluded with the earnest request that Jaqui should not tell Signora Paltravi where he was going, or that he had heard from the unfortunate writer. Jaqui set off at once, for fear he should not find his friend alive, and on the way his emotions were extremely conflicting."

"And very wicked, I have no doubt," said the Daughter of the House; "he hoped that old man would die."

"There is some truth in what you say, miss," answered John Gayther, with a proud glance at the Mistress of the House, who was not ashamed to return it, "for Jaqui could not help thinking that if old Doctor Paltravi, who could not expect any further happiness in this life, and who must die before very long, anyhow, owing to his age and misfortunes, should choose

to leave the world at this time, it would not only be a good thing for him, but it would make matters a great deal easier for some people he would leave behind him. In real life you cannot help such thoughts as this, miss, unless you are very, very good, far above the average.

"Jaqui found the old doctor very sick indeed, and he immediately set about doing everything he could to make him feel better, but Doctor Paltravi did not care anything about medical treatment. It was not for that he had sent for Jaqui; what he desired was to make arrangements for the future of Signora Paltravi, and he wanted Jaqui to carry out his wishes. In the first place, he asked him to take charge of the lady's fortune, and administer it to her advantage, and secondly, he desired that he would marry her. 'If I die, knowing that the dear woman who was once my wife, is to marry you,' said the sick man, 'and thus be protected and cared for, I shall leave this world grateful and happy. I can never do anything for her myself, but if you will take my place, my friend—and I am sure Signora Paltravi will easily learn to like you—that will be the next best thing. Now will you promise me?' Jaqui knelt by the side of the bed, took his friend's hand and promised. There were tears in his eyes, but whether they were tears of joy or of sorrow, it is not for me to say."

"It is for me, though," said the Daughter of the House, very severely. "I know that man thoroughly."

The gardener went on with his story. "Jaqui remained several days with Doctor Paltravi, but he could not do his poor friend any good. The sick man was nervous and anxious; he was afraid that some one else might get ahead of Jaqui and marry Signora Paltravi, and he urged his friend not to stay with him, where he could be of no service, but to go back to Florence and prepare to marry Signora Paltravi when she should become a widow. As Jaqui was also getting nervous, being possessed of the same fears, he at last consented to carry out the old doctor's wishes and his own at the same time, and returned to Florence.

"When he met Signora Paltravi she



*Drawn by Vincent A. Svoboda.*

"SIGNORA PALTRAVI WAS ALIVE!"



greeted him warmly, plainly delighted to see him, but for a moment he was startled. This lady was really very much older than when he had left her; her hair was nearly gray."

"Served him right," said the Daughter of the House.

"But when he began to talk with her," continued John Gayther, "his former feelings for her returned. She was charming and he forgot about her hair. Her conversation greatly interested him, and now that his conscience came to the assistance of his affection, for he was doing exactly what Doctor Paltravi desired him to do, he was quite happy, and spent a pleasant evening, but in the morning, as he looked at himself in the mirror, he remembered her gray hair."

At the word "conscience" an indication of a sneer had appeared on the face of the young lady, but she did not interrupt.

"It was about a week after this that Signora Paltravi sat alone in her room on the second floor, and Doctor Jaqui sat alone in his room on the first floor; she was waiting for him to come to her, and he was not intending to go. He believed, with reason, that she was expecting him to propose marriage to her, and he did not intend to offer himself. He was very willing to marry a middle-aged lady, but he did not wish to espouse an old one, at least an old one who looked her age, and that Signora Paltravi was going to look her full age in a very short time, Jaqui had now no doubt whatever. Her face was beginning to show a great many wrinkles, and her hair was not only gray but white in some places. These changes did not in the least interfere with her good looks, for in some ways she was growing more handsome and stately than she had been before, but our good friend Jaqui——"

"Not my good friend Jaqui, please," interrupted the Daughter of the House.

"Said to himself," continued John Gayther, "that he did not want a mother but a wife. A few weeks before, he would have supposed such a thing impossible, but now a certain sympathy for Florino rose in his heart. So he did not go upstairs that evening, and the lady was very much disturbed and did not sleep well.

"In a few days Jaqui got ready to go

away again, and this time he went to bid the lady good-by. She had heard he was about to take a journey, and as he greeted her he saw she had been weeping, but she was composed now. 'Farewell, my friend,' said she. 'I know what is happening to me, and I know what is happening to you. It will be well for you to stay away for a time, and when you return you will see that we are to be very good friends, greatly interested in the progress of scientific investigation.' Then she smiled and shook hands with him.

"Jaqui went to Rome and to Naples, wandering about in an objectless sort of way. He dreaded to go to Milan because he had not heard that Doctor Paltravi was dead, and it would have been very hard for him to have to explain to the sick man why he had decided not to carry out his wishes. Apart from the disappointment he would feel when he heard that Signora Paltravi was not to have the kind guardianship he had planned for her, the old doctor would be grieved to the soul when he heard his wife had lost the youth he had taken from her, but which he had expected to return in full measure. What made it worse for Jaqui was that he could administer no comfort with the news. He would not sacrifice himself to please the old man; promise or no promise, this was impossible. He had not consented to marry an old lady. Again, from the very bottom of his heart, did Jaqui wish there never had been a lady in a box.

"At last, when he could put it off no longer, he went to Milan, and there found Doctor Paltravi still alive, but very low and very much troubled because he had not heard from Jaqui. The latter soon perceived it would be utterly useless to try to deceive or in any way to mislead the old man, who, although in sad bodily condition, still preserved the acuteness of his mind. Jaqui had to tell him everything, and he began with Florino and ended with himself, not omitting to state how the lady had recognized the situation, and what she had said. Then, fearing the consequences of his revelation, he put his hand into his leathern bag to take out a bottle of cordial, but Doctor Paltravi waved away the medicine, and sat up in bed.

"Did you say," he cried, "that she is



growing old, and that you believe she will continue to do so until she appears to be the lady of threescore and ten she really is?" "Yes," said Jaqui, "that is what I said, and that is what I believe." "Then, by all the Holy Angels," cried Doctor Paltravi, jumping out of bed, "she shall be my wife and nobody else need concern himself about her." "

"Hurrah!" cried the Daughter of the House, involuntarily springing to her feet; "I was so afraid you would not come to that."

"I was bound to come to that, miss," said John Gayther.

"And did they really marry again?" asked the Mistress of the House.

"No," was the reply. "they did not. There was no need of it. The priests assured them most emphatically that there was not the slightest need of it, and so they came together again after this long interval, which had been forty years to him, but which she had lived in forty days. If they had been together all the time they could not have loved each other more than they did now. To her eyes, so suddenly matured, there appeared a handsome, stately old gentleman, seventy years of age; to his eyes, from which the visions of youth had been so suddenly removed, there appeared a beautiful, stately old lady, seventy-one years of age. It was just as natural as if one of them had slept all day while the other had remained awake; it was all the same to them both in the evening.

"She soon ceased to think how cruelly she had sent him away from her, for she had been so young when she did it, and he now gave no thought to what she had done, remembering how young she was when she did it."

"And Jaqui?" asked the Mistress of the House.

"Oh, Jaqui was the happiest of the three of them, happy himself and happy in their happiness. Never again did he wish the lady in her box. He looked no further for a smaller house which should contain but two floors; he was as glad to stay where he was as they were to have him. They were three very happy people, all of them greatly interested in the progress of scientific investigation."

"And not one of them deserved to be happy," said the Daughter of the House.

"But you must remember, miss, this is a story about realities," said the gardener.

She sighed a little sigh; she knew that where realities are concerned, this sort of thing generally happens.

"That is a good story, John," said the Mistress of the House, rising from her seat, "but it seemed to me, while you were talking, that you sometimes thought of yourself as Jaqui."

"There is something in that, madam," answered the gardener; "it may have been that during the story I sometimes did think that I myself might have been Jaqui."

"Mama," said the Daughter of the House, as the two walked out of the garden, "I am trying to understand John Gayther, but I have not succeeded yet. But one thing is very plain; he used much better language to-day than he did when he was telling a story to me alone. I think he did so because he was telling it to you."

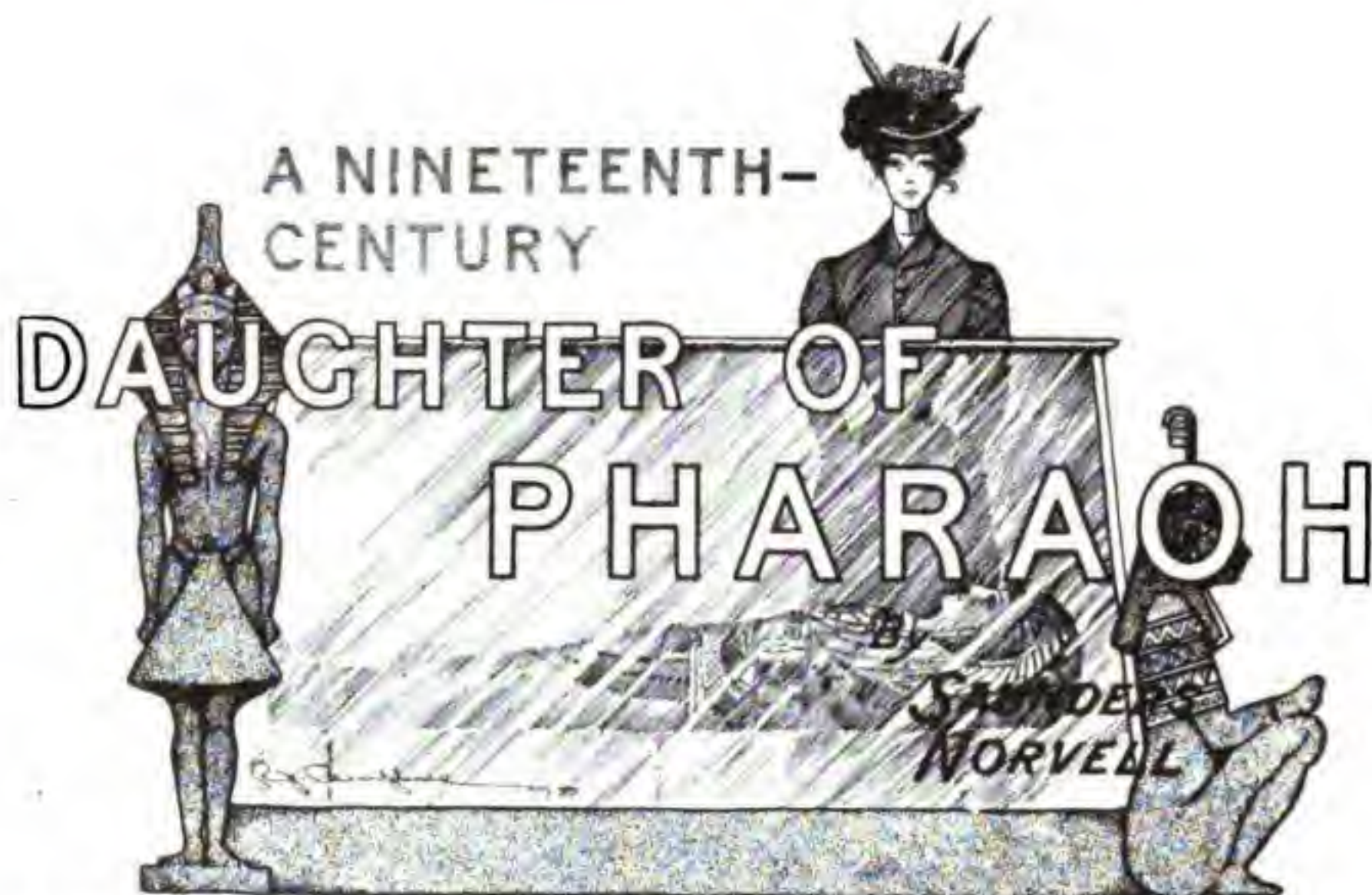
"And why should he do that?" asked her mother.

"I don't know; at least, I think I don't know; but I fancy he can suit his stories to different people. And, more than that, I am positively certain that he has a story of his own, and some day I am going to get him to tell it to me."

"May I be there to hear," said her mother.







MY friend, Dr. Adam Green, a celebrated psychologist, inherited a large fortune from his father while still a young man. Not being under the necessity of practising his profession for a livelihood, he devoted his time to the study of unusual cases. He became recognized early in life as an authority on psychological questions. As a result of his investigations he gave to the world much valuable information concerning diseases of the mind.

Doctor Green was about seventy years old and of very striking appearance, with long white hair and strongly marked features. His keen gray eyes, overhung by dark and heavy brows, were bright and penetrating, and his large, firm mouth and forcible chin, softened by lines that mingled the tender with the strong, were a fitting balance to his finely molded brow. He was thoroughly a man of intellectual temperament. Although he was a profound student and a man eminent among men, his manner was characterized by that simplicity and ingenuous grace which always accompany unconscious greatness.

This story was told me by Doctor Green during two winter evenings. He said I might publish it after his death, little realizing how soon his end would come.

I was one of the executors of his estate, and among his papers I found voluminous notes bearing on this case. I write the story as the doctor told it to me.

As you are aware, I had gone to Europe for the purpose of studying several peculiar cases about which I had been corresponding. While there, by the merest chance, the strangest and most absorbing experience I ever had came under my observation. It concerned a beautiful American girl.

One day while walking along the Champs Elysées, I was surprised to meet my old friend, Arthur Brownleigh, and his daughter, Margaret, of New York. When they had lived in that city, ten years ago, I had been a visitor at their home, and I felt at once that our meeting was one mutually agreeable. Mr. Brownleigh had been a successful speculator and was a man of large fortune. Having retired from active business life, he had gone to Paris to give Margaret the opportunity to study painting, for which she had marked talent, as I afterward learned. Mr. Brownleigh was a widower and Margaret his only child. When I had last seen her she was a little tot of eight, but she had now blossomed into a most beautiful and charming young woman.



My intimacy with Mr. Brownleigh and his daughter was at once renewed. I visited them frequently. Their home, in one of the most fashionable quarters of the city, was elegant in the extreme, in every way betokening wealth and refinement. Still engrossed in business affairs, Mr. Brownleigh was seldom at home. I saw a good deal of Margaret, and I soon observed she was an unusual girl. Notwithstanding her youth and the difference in our age, she interested me greatly, and, indeed, we soon became companions, and in our daily walks and talks we found that we had many congenial tastes. She had arranged a studio on the second floor near her apartments, and here we spent many pleasant afternoons. While she painted, I would either sit and idly watch the progress of her work or read to her.

A striking characteristic of her studio was an Egyptian effect. The articles of furniture, the hangings, trinkets, and many of the pictures, were Egyptian. One day when I referred to this decorative scheme she seemed annoyed for a moment. Then she led the conversation to the history of ancient Egypt. I was much surprised at her knowledge of the subject. While she talked of the manners and customs of the people, she rose, and, opening a small cabinet, showed me a remarkable collection of Egyptian jewels, some being very rare and curious. She said that from childhood things Egyptian had always had a strange fascination for her. She had persuaded her father to promise to make the trip up the Nile, and talked joyfully of the coming visit.

About three months after my first meeting with Margaret, I noticed a singular change in her manner. At first I thought I must be mistaken in regard to a sadness that seemed to be stealing over her, but from day to day (we now were almost daily companions), by careful observation, I became convinced that this peculiarity in her manner was no varying mood. I wondered if it would be well for me to speak to her about it, and to ask her confidence, but I feared the suggestion of such a thing, coming from me, a physician, might alarm her, so I held my peace and studied her closely.

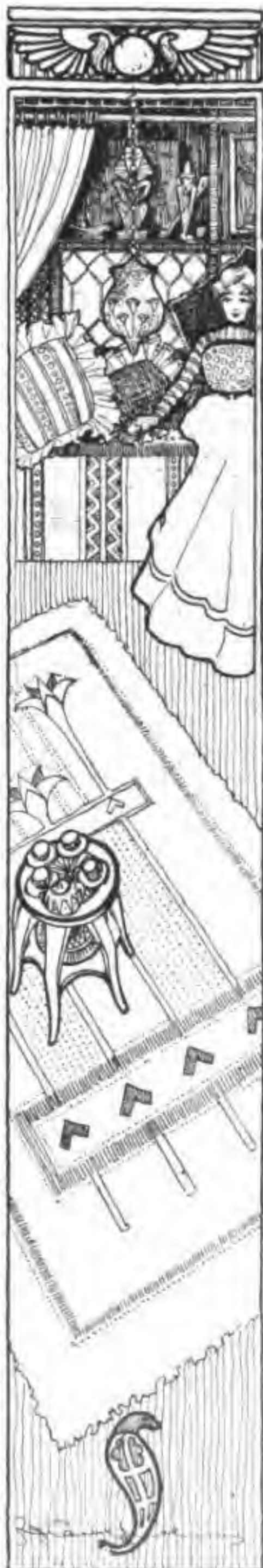
One day when I called I found Margaret lying upon a divan in the studio. She had been weeping. I waited, without questioning her, confident that she would soon tell me the cause of her distress. Finally, she said, "Doctor, I know you will think I am a silly girl, but I want to ask you a very odd question." She was very much in earnest. "You have known the history of my family for many generations, have you not?"

"Yes."

"Then, doctor," she asked, "did you ever know of a case of insanity in it?"

I was startled by this question. I told her that so far as I knew all her family had been mentally well balanced.

The girl made no answer, but there was an expression in her eyes that told me she was suffering. I asked her why she had put that question to me. She told me that when younger she had fallen into the habit of day-dreaming; that at first her visions were vague and indistinct, but as







time passed they were becoming clearer; that all of these dreams were of an existence ages in the past. She said that images of strange people, of temples and deserts, came to her, and they had continued to reappear in a dim and shadowy way until they were now with her almost constantly. Recently (especially since she and I had been visiting the museum) they seemed to become clearer, until she was alarmed and feared her mind was affected.

I laughed away her fears, assuring her that that state of mind was nearly always to be attributed to some physical disorder. After this Margaret's spirits seemed to improve. She was herself again for a while. But in a few days this sadness returned.

About a week after this, when I called, the servant told me that Miss Margaret had left instructions for me to come immediately to her studio. I found her walking to and fro, intensely agitated. She came to me with both arms outstretched, and, taking my hands in

hers, cried, "Doctor, I am sure that my mind is weakening; I am positive!"

I tried to soothe her, but she continued, brokenly, "A few days ago, at the art-store where you and I have so often gone together, I saw a picture that made a startling impression on me." She led me to one side of the room. There upon an easel was a peculiar picture. It was a scene in a desert. There was a well with a few palm-trees beside it. The general effect was a strange reddish tone. Not a living creature was to be seen—nothing but sand and sky, the well and a few palm-trees.

Margaret could not control her emotion. Turning to me, she exclaimed: "Doctor, that picture may not seem remarkable to you, but I am sure I have seen that well before. I have actually been in that picture. I am just as familiar with the surroundings of that place as I am with those of our old home."

As she took the matter so seriously, I humored her. She stood off and looked at the picture, approached nearer and examined it closely, and then walked around the room evidently trying to recall some memory of the past. I did my best to convince her there was nothing unusual about her condition; that it was not an uncommon thing for people to have such temporary hallucinations. I am afraid I did not follow the truth very closely.

All went well for about a week. Then I found the girl with another picture about which she was even more agitated than she had been over the first one. This picture was another desert scene, but in the foreground was an Egyptian temple. She said that she had the strange feeling of having ascended and descended the steps of that temple, not once but many times—she could almost remember the people who were with her—and, strangest of all, she felt one presence that seemed to be trying to break through the obscurity of the past and appear before her; but like a name that is forgotten and cannot be recalled, this image, although constantly eluding her, was always present.

Margaret's state of mind was now becoming so very peculiar that I grew alarmed. Had she not been in such good health, I should not have been so much



surprised at her mental condition. I still believed, however, that her hallucination was simply temporary, and thought it best not to mention it to her father, but decided to be with her as much as possible and to study her as closely as I could.

Again, in a week I found Margaret in a distressed state of mind one morning. She showed me a third picture. This one was most remarkable. It represented the interior of a temple or tomb—very likely the latter—and was finished in the most minute detail. Around the walls were pillars between which were great slabs of granite, and on these slabs was much writing, apparently in Egyptian characters. In the center of the room was a block of granite, carved somewhat in the shape of a couch. Around the room were implements. It looked as if the occupants of the room had just gone out.

Margaret threw her arms around me, allowed her head to fall on my shoulder and sobbed convulsively. "Doctor," she cried, "it is all coming back; I feel it. I have been in that room. I have read those inscriptions. It seems to me I am reading part of them now. I have sat here for hours reading them, and it is coming back to me." Then she pointed to an inscription in a language totally unknown to me, and began to read, slowly, as a child reads from a primer. The situation was now beyond the limits of the commonplace. I realized either that my friend's daughter was losing her mind, or that I was on the eve of making a great scientific discovery. I listened without comment. Then I talked to her about Egypt and things Egyptian in the usual way, and she became calm and collected. During this visit, for the first time, I wondered who the painter of these pictures could be. I looked for a signature, but could find nothing but a few peculiar marks in the lower corner of the paintings.

This was in the morning. I suggested that we drive out into the suburbs of Paris, and, returning, call for an acquaintance of mine, the famous Mariette, a member of the French Academy, and one of the most celebrated Egyptologists of this generation. I desired to see the effect these pictures would have upon him. Be-

fore leaving, I requested Margaret to drape the pictures, and she did. While we were driving and during a little luncheon, Margaret was very silent, but by degrees she became more cheerful. On our return we stopped for my friend and told him we wished him to inspect some paintings. He seemed to be charmed with Margaret. We soon arrived at her home and immediately went to the studio.

I removed the drapery from the picture of the well in the desert first. Mariette examined it closely, but it evidently did not impress him as being extraordinary. He remarked that it was well painted and that the reddish color was quite peculiar, a somewhat uncommon tone among Parisian painters.

The second picture, that of the Egyptian temple, seemed to attract his attention. He examined it carefully without comment. When I drew the drapery away from the third picture, he at first looked at it from a distance. A moment later I saw that something in





it had caught his eye. Stepping forward, he brought his face nearer to the canvas and uttered an exclamation of great surprise. With his index-finger he followed the lines of the writing on the slabs between the pillars. Suddenly he turned and called for a magnifying-glass. He studied the picture intently. His breathing became labored. Finally, turning to me, he asked in an agitated voice, "Who painted this picture?" And then, on second thought, he sought the signature of the painter. He could make nothing of it. Again he turned, and asked, "Where did you get it?"

He looked at me and then at Margaret. She was all attention. I realized that there must be something extraordinary in the picture so to agitate this usually self-contained scientist. I asked him if there was anything remarkable about it.

"Remarkable! Remarkable!" he repeated. "Why, my dear sir, that picture is an event in a century. Do you not know that in that picture one of the lost Egyptian alphabets is completed? Do you not know that in excavating in Egypt we found a slab that was evidently the key to an alphabet, but it was broken and notwithstanding the most diligent search we were never able to find the missing parts? Hence, until this day, we have been able to decipher only part of this alphabet; and as many inscriptions of that age were written in it, we have been unable to read them. Here in this picture is the complete alphabet, and it will enable us to read many inscriptions hitherto only partly clear. The man who painted that picture knows the secret of that lost alphabet."

For a moment, in my excitement, I had forgotten Margaret, but when I now turned to her I saw her face was very pale. She was also gazing at this tablet between the pillars, following the hieroglyphics and reading in a low voice. The scientist looked at her, and cried: "Mon Dieu! young woman, where did you learn ancient Egyptian?"

Standing behind Mariette, I held up a warning finger to Margaret. She burst into merry laughter.

"Why, monsieur," she exclaimed, "did you really think I was reading Egyptian? This discovery must have affected your

hearing." For a moment he gazed at her intently. Then he turned to me and said, "You have here a picture that is worth a vast sum of money; you, of course, know the story of this picture, but it is evident that neither of you comprehends what a great scientific discovery you have made in finding it." Realizing that Mariette was greatly interested and that something must be done immediately to stop all further investigation on his part, I hurriedly bade Margaret good-by, promising to see her early the next day.

I took Mariette by the arm and led him to our carriage, and by my instructions we were driven to his home by a roundabout route. On the way I told him that I alone could unravel the mystery of that picture. I insisted that he give me his word of honor that he would leave the matter to me, and I obtained his promise only by agreeing to tell him all of the story at the proper time. You may imagine my feelings as I drove back to my hotel. Here was a young girl with a picture that completed a lost Egyptian alphabet, and this young girl I had heard reading ancient Egyptian as one of our children would read English. I knew that I was just on the threshold of one of the greatest scientific discoveries of the age, or about to have a wonderful psychological phenomenon explained to me.

The next step was to find the painter of the pictures. I went to the art-store, but they knew nothing of him. I left instructions that his name and address were to be secured if he should bring another picture. I employed a private detective and paid the art-dealer to inform the detective at once in case the artist came to the store or sent a messenger.

Week after week passed with no sign of the artist and no more pictures. Margaret regained her composure and seemed to be in a far happier frame of mind. She told me she knew she should some day meet the artist and all would be well.

Some time after this, when I called, Margaret quietly told me she had seen that day, in the living flesh, the spirit that had come to her in her dreams. She was calm and serene. She told me that recently she had been going to a museum in the mornings; that there she had been attracted



by the Egyptian collection and that in this collection there was a curious mummy case of an Egyptian Princess, the most beautiful she had ever seen. It was different from the others, in that its resemblance to a human form was much more pronounced. The work upon it was ornate. Evidently, it had taken many months and infinite pains to decorate this case. She said this mummy had a peculiar fascination for her, that she often stood over the glass case and gazed down upon the form of the Egyptian Princess. That morning she stood for a long time dreaming of the past and gazing down through the glass top of the case upon the mute form beneath until, finally, she felt that some one was looking intently at her. She glanced across and there upon a settee sat the living realization of her visions. He was a young man. Sitting there he looked into her eyes and at first seemed spell-bound. For a time—she did not know how long—neither moved. Then he started as if to approach her, and with a great effort she turned her eyes away and fled precipitately.

"But, Doctor," she said, "I am happy. I know that he is the painter of these pictures. I have feared I should find that he was not among the living, but now I know that I shall meet him, that we shall know each other and all of this strange mystery will be explained."

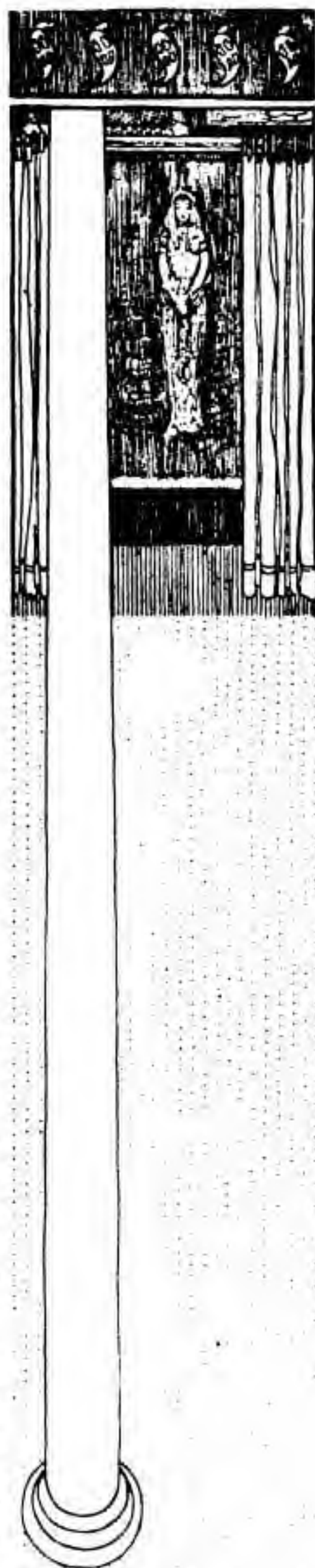
Margaret and I visited the art-store every day. We drove, we studied, we went to the museum, but there was no sign of our artist; not a word, not a token from him. One afternoon when we went to the art-store the dealer called me to one side and whispered: "He has come! We have found him! But," he exclaimed, "first see the picture."

The dealer took us to the gallery. I told Margaret to be prepared for another picture. It was a life-size portrait of an Egyptian Princess standing beside a well. The well was the same as that in the smaller picture. The Princess was the living, breathing portrait of Margaret. She seemed about to step forth from the frame. On her head was the symbol of the Pharaohs, the reigning house of Egypt.

I shall not attempt to describe this picture to you. It was marvelous; it was

wonderful. I bought it without hesitation, regardless of the great sum asked, and ordered it removed to Margaret's studio. I hurriedly took Margaret home and then told the cabman to drive to the address of the artist. He took me to an out-of-the-way part of the city. We stopped before a very old and dingy building. I handed my card to the concierge and asked him to deliver it immediately to Mr. David Carleton, for that was the name given me by the art-dealer. After climbing many flights of stairs, I was shown into what was apparently an artist's studio. The room was just beneath the roof. I was met by a young man about thirty years old, tall and straight. His complexion was olive; his hair, black; his eyes were dark and unusually large and far apart. He was dressed in a neat walking-suit. There was nothing in his appearance to indicate eccentricity.

I told him that a friend of mine in whom I was very much inter-



*By the artist*



ested had bought four of his paintings—the three paintings of Egyptian scenes, and, finally, the portrait of the Egyptian Princess. I asked him if the pictures were original. He replied that they were works of imagination. I then complimented him upon his knowledge of Egypt. To this he made no reply, but I could see that he was mentally taking my measure.

We dropped into an easy conversation about the pictures. I told him who I was, and that I followed the study of the human mind, simply as a matter of interest and from a scientific viewpoint. I could see that he was becoming interested. I made up my mind that the best thing to do was to be perfectly frank and straightforward. I told him that a patient under my charge had brought me to him. After some further conversation, I asked if he would not come to my hotel and dine with me. He consented.

After dinner we lighted our cigars and drew up before the fire. During the dinner I could see that he was gradually throwing off his reserve. He dropped the indifferent manner of the man of the world and indicated a deep interest in me and what I had to say. For a few moments we sat before the fire and smoked in silence. Then I put the question to him point-blank: "Who was the subject of your last painting—the Egyptian Princess?" There was a long silence, during which he gazed into the glowing coals.

Finally he turned to me and said: "I like you. I believe you are worthy of my confidence, so I will tell you my story without reserve."

"It is possible you may think I am demented, or that I am a dreamer, but I know that while my experience has been unusual, I am perfectly sane. I assure you I have had a terrible burden to carry, and it will be a relief to share it with another."

"The painting you bought to-day was from two subjects—one, but a dream, a recollection; the other, from the life. The recollection was that of a Princess who lived in Egypt centuries ago. The living subject was a young girl I saw recently in a museum."

"Now, Doctor, I know who this young lady is. I know that you are a very warm friend of her family. I painted that picture

in the hope that it would lead to my meeting her."

"I tell you this because I feel that you will be a friend to me and help me. I will tell you my story from the beginning—the story of my physical life in the present, and a story that you may call a dream, but I assure you the one to me is just as actual as the other. In fact, I sometimes think that my existence in my dreams is the more real of the two."

"My father was a merchant in New York city. He was fairly prosperous. I was educated to be a painter, first in New York and afterward here in Paris. In Paris I led the life of the students. At the height of my extravagance my father died, leaving me heavily involved. After I had paid my debts, by the sale of my effects, I was nearly penniless. I could not and did not leave Paris. I had a hard struggle. Often I could get but one meal a day, and that not a good one. Because of lack of proper nourishment I became weak, and as I decreased in strength physically, I seemed to increase mentally and spiritually. At this time I first began to have day-dreams. These dreams, in the beginning, were distant and shadowy, but soon became more distinct. They were always of the same country, and that country was Egypt. My life became devoted to the Egyptian section of the museum and to the dreams."

"One day I noticed the mummy case of an Egyptian Princess. This case had a strange fascination for me. For a long time I could not paint, and then it occurred to me to paint the scenes and people I saw in my dreams. I painted first the picture of the desert. Imagine my surprise when this picture was bought—the art-dealer told me—by a young woman. Then I painted the picture of the temple, and this was bought, also, as soon as it was put on sale. I became deeply interested, and determined to paint a picture in the minutest detail. The interior of the temple was just as clear to me in memory as if I had left it yesterday. I painted it. This picture was bought, but the art-dealer could not or would not tell me the name of the purchaser."

"One day not long after this, I was sitting in the museum beside the mummy of the Princess, dreaming. By degrees I



came to myself. Half rising, I was spell-bound by a beautiful picture I shall never forget. It seemed to me at first only another vision, but of far greater vividness. Before me was the familiar recumbent form of the Princess, encased in her intricately decorated casket of ebony and gold. She gazed up with those dark, inscrutable eyes. Upon her haughty, silent lips the mystery of the centuries was still unbroken. Human passions could surge and break around her, but, changeless and composed, she seemed to lie in immovable confidence awaiting some great end beyond the knowledge of mere mortals. But through the glass I saw another form. A living woman was standing beyond the case with bowed head gazing down upon the silent figure beneath. She was as still as the daughter of Pharaoh. She wore a tan-colored, tailor-made gown. She was tall, and the tailor's art brought out the graceful curves of her full but youthful figure. The light from above made luminous her loosely confined brown hair. Around her head the stray tresses escaped in waves of burnished gold. I looked upon this scene long and intently. The strangest of emotions filled my breast. At last, no longer able to restrain myself, I moved. The spell was broken. She slowly raised her head and our eyes met. I almost screamed aloud, and I thought my heart would stop beating. Great God! before me was the Princess of my dreams! The same large brilliant eyes of brown, the clearly defined, arched eyebrows, the straight nose, the curved red lips, the oval chin, the dark, transparent complexion—in every detail she was the same. Her eyes dilated as she looked at me. An expression of surprise came over her face, and before I could collect my scattered wits she was gone.

"From that time I made it the object of my life to find out who she was, for she seemed to be the very key to all my indistinct and misty recollections. With this in view I painted her portrait. The picture speaks for itself. My very soul was in the work.

"Having told you the story of the real, I will now tell you the story of the unreal. This story has come to me as blocks are put together by children—first

one part, then another. Finally they have been joined, and now I tell you the story complete and finished because I want your advice as a friend, and a man of science.

"In this time that has been so long gone, my father was a sculptor. He was employed by the great Pharaoh upon the temple. As a child, he took me with him to his work, and my earliest recollections are of playing among the chips of the sculptors. To amuse me, my father made me small tools with which to chip the broken fragments of stone. He soon noticed my work, and it was commented upon by the other sculptors. They taught me and I rapidly developed great skill. I was brought to the attention of Pharaoh himself, who put me under instructors and governors and I was taught in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. There was one man among them, the high priest, who became a second father to me. He loved me as a son.

"From time to time Pharaoh would come to see





my work. He was pleased with it, and fine clothing and jewels were given to me, and in the rooms of Pharaoh's palace I wrought the picture of Pharaoh and of his people, and on those walls I depicted his battles.

"One day Pharaoh sent word that I was to come into an inner room of the palace, and then I was told I was to carve in stone the image of Pharaoh's daughter. When the block was prepared, the girl was brought forth and stood before me. Of all the beautiful women I had seen, she was the most beautiful. As I worked from day to day upon the stone, I saw that she looked upon me with favor, and while the attendants slept, we talked together. I told her the secrets of the trees and of the birds, of the waters and of the skies; and she softly sang to me the songs of old Egypt.

"Why should I tell the story? It was the same then as it is now. We loved. One day, while the attendant dozed, I left my work and approached the Princess. I bowed down at her feet. I told her of my love. I shall never forget the tender sympathy and encouragement with which she gazed down upon me, nor shall I forget the sudden look of horror and fear that came into her face. Turning quickly, I felt my blood freeze in my veins. Behind me stood Pharaoh. His eyes were drawn together. Upon his lips was a cold and sneering smile. He called an attendant and whispered a few words into his ear. I was seized, taken from the palace, and delivered into the hands of the high priest in the temple. I told him all, and my venerable friend wept.

"The sentence came quickly. I was to be executed in the temple by the high priest. I accepted my fate with a composure that was surprising to me. Finally, it was the time. I was alone in the chamber. The high priest came in. I prepared myself for death, and then, falling upon my neck, he wept, saying that my mind and my art were too great for him to destroy. He pretended to kill me and I feigned death and was carried to the rooms hollowed from the hills where they embalmed the bodies of the dead.

"He kept me here. I was taught the now lost secrets of embalming. I devoted

my days to the carving of mummy cases, and only at night would I ascend the hills and study the stars and breathe the fresh air of heaven. And here, in these rooms, I found in a secret chamber the archives of the kingdom. Here in this room were the great secrets of the nation, and among them was a slab on which was engraved the alphabet of the language.

"I learned that one of the men with whom I worked was a lover of one of the handmaids of the Princess. Through him I sent her messages, and at length an answer came back. We brought it about that she came to me in disguise, and in the secret room of the alphabet we spent many happy hours. Often in the night she would come to me and we walked upon the hills.

"Once I waited for her and she came not. For many nights and days I waited in vain. Then the high priest came to me and said that, according to the custom of our race, she was to marry a royal prince. All joy had gone out of my life, but I lived on, now in dread and now in hope, and one day when I walked into the large chamber—the room of pillars and inscriptions, the room you have already seen in the last picture—I saw upon the black marble couch in the center of the room a body covered with white.

"I had embalmed these bodies so often that death had lost its terrors to me. I mechanically pulled down the covering from the face. I looked and was quiet. Not a word escaped me; not a muscle quivered. Before me was the beautiful face of the woman I loved, calm and still in death. I do not know how long I was there. At last my friend, the high priest, came. He told me she had taken her life, and that I must embalm her body.

"Thus we were together for many days because the process of embalming was very slow. Just before it was finished, I wrote on papyrus the story of our love. I laid this beneath her folded hands upon her bosom and then wrapped her in strips of finest linen. When this was done, I carved her case, and into the carving of this case I put all that I knew. It grew slowly beneath my hands and was beautiful. But as I labored, I felt that my life was going out in the labor, and as the



work neared its completion my weakness increased. When it was finished, we took her body and put it in the case. It was sealed, and as I gazed upon my finished work a great yearning came over me. I fell forward over the case, and then all was darkness."

When Carleton had finished the story, the fire in the grate was out. We sat in silence. After a time he said, "To-morrow, then, shall I see her?" I told Carleton to come in the morning, and he left me.

The next day I went to Margaret and told her I had met the painter. I told her I thought that he was worthy, and she asked me to bring him that afternoon and introduce him to her father as a friend of mine.

They met. I was with them. She begged him to tell her the story from the beginning, and as he told the story it came back to her more vividly. How they enjoyed living over again those days when he carved her image in stone, and the days in the caverns, and the beautiful nights on the hills! But his memory was always clearer than hers.

We drove, we dined, and on moonlight nights I went with them to the Seine. I frequently left them alone. They talked to each other in the unknown tongue. It was weird and strange to hear her sing to him in words that had been dead for centuries. How happy they were!

By degrees he told her all the story, except the last. She pleaded with him to continue, and he repeated the story from the beginning, telling her incidents he had forgotten the first time. He never reached the point of the broken engagement.

The rest I will pass over hurriedly because the joy and the happiness came to an end. Margaret became ill. She declined rapidly. She begged me to persuade her father to take her on the proposed trip up the Nile. I told her father all, and they were betrothed. And so Margaret and David, and her father and I, went to Alexandria, and ascended the river on a dahabiyeh. I shall never forget those moonlight nights on the Nile—the dim, mysterious distance, fancy-filled with all the stories of the past, the soft murmurs

of the waters around our boat.

Margaret grew weaker from day to day. She constantly begged David to tell her the rest of the story. Finally I let him know that her death was near.

Landing one day near the ruins of a great temple, the two wandered off by themselves. Sitting under the shadow of a broken column, he told her the story of the Princess's death. After that she appeared to be happier, but failed fast until, not long afterward, the end came.

David returned with me to Alexandria. Then he, without any apparent disease, began to decline. He died within the month.

Thus the strange story was ended. I was anxious to get back to other scenes. I was greatly depressed. I went to Paris and called upon Mariette and told him the entire story. He was skeptical, at the same time courteous. He saw how much in earnest I was, but he told me very plainly that he did not believe the story.





One day when Mariette chid me about this story, rather making light of it, I became irritated and said to him, "Do you not know that the truth of this story can be proved?"

"How?" he asked.

"The mummy in the museum has never been unwrapped. That, David Carleton claimed, was the body of the Princess. He said he wrote the story of their love upon a piece of papyrus and placed it in her hands clasped upon her bosom. Have this mummy unwound and let us see what we shall see."

After some effort, the necessary authority

was secured. A number of scientists met at the museum at night. The air-tight glass case was opened. The mummy case was put upon a low table. The lid was removed. From within came the musty odor of age. The wrappings of the body were slowly and carefully unwound. The mummy was wonderfully well preserved. The outlines of a beautiful young girl could be distinguished. Within the clasped hands upon the breast was a papyrus. And on that papyrus was written the story of the love of the sculptor and the Princess as told by David Carleton to me.



## LOVE'S OFFERTORY.

BY THOMAS WALSH.

If when I raise my heart to Thee, the thought  
Of her comes o'er me in suffusing flame,  
Count not amiss, High God, nor grievous, aught  
That love of her should waken with Thy name.

And when my soul upon the pallid heights,  
In realms Thy contemplation rarefies,  
Feels Thy pure tension failing, lend Thy lights  
To her that I may worship through her eyes.

Alone to Thee, Great Father, I'd confide  
My wavering thoughts, save for the witchery  
That wraps my languorous senses in its tide:  
This unworthy incense I must offer Thee.



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**HIPRAH HUNT IN HIS STUDY.**



## HIPRAH HUNT'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE INFERNO.

DEPICTED BY ARTHUR YOUNG.



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THE JOURNEY BEGINS.

**H**IPRAH HUNT was the founder and president of a Dante Club in that part of New England where witchcraft once flourished. His great-great-granduncle had been prominent in the affairs of Salem when that village was making history. A great-great-aunt had lent her aid in the extermination of witches.

Possibly it was atavism that brought Mr. Hiprah Hunt to prominence in the Dante Society and eventually put upon his shoulders the presidency of the club.

Hiprah Hunt would pore over the pages of Dante's "Inferno" all night and regret the dawn. He used other books as supplementary reading. He frequently gave public talks to his fellow-townsmen, and often lectured in adjacent counties, on the theme of his all-absorbing study. He read and discoursed on this doctrine so much that the underworld became to him as much a reality as the upper one.

There had been a very spirited discussion in the club one December evening. Mr. Hunt had reached his home at a late hour somewhat exhausted with his efforts as presiding officer. His wife had provided dressing-gown and slippers, and a deeply cushioned chair stood before the comfortable wood-fire. Sinking into the chair, he glanced affectionately at the book-shelf above.

On it stood a beautifully bound copy of the "Inferno," flanked on the one side by John Bunyan's "Sighs From Hell" and on the other by Jonathan Edwards' pamphlet on "The Justice of Endless Punishment"; then "The Sermons of John Wesley," a large copy of Christopher Love's "Hell's Terror" and a smaller copy of Spurgeon on "The Resurrection of the Dead." An ancient-looking volume was Jeremy Taylor's "Pains of Hell," and also in old binding Alexander Jepson's "The Certainty and Importance of a Future Judgment and Everlasting Retribution," while on the extreme end stood that notable book, William Cooper's "Three Discourses Concerning the Reality and Extremity and the Absolute Eternity of Hell Punishment."

Perhaps the warmth of the open fire tended to drowsiness. Presently, as he sat, a figure appeared before him standing in one of the recesses which the firelight but half penetrated.

"Mr. Hunt, I believe?"

"Yes."

"The president of the Dante Society?"

"Yes; but you have the advantage of me."

"No matter. We have viewed with alarm, sir, the discussions which have been taking place recently in your society, and I have come as the bearer of an invitation that you should visit our inferno and see things, not



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MR. HUNT'S ELOQUENT RESPONSE  
TO THE OVATION.





Copyright, typewritten by Arthur Young. HAND IN HAND.

with the poetical imagination of Dante, but as they are in reality."

"But how?" broke in Mr. Hunt.

"Oh! that is quite easy. If you are willing to trust to my guidance, I will attend to the details of the journey."

Mr. Hunt arose and looked for a moment hesitatingly; then, as if throwing caution to the winds, he pulled off his dressing-gown, kicked aside his slippers.

"Excuse me for a moment," he said, "and I will be ready to accompany you."

We will pass lightly over the incidents of the trip itself. In after years Mr. Hunt was never able to recall this part very distinctly.

Presently the obliging personage who

kept close at his elbow said, "You will find that they are expecting you, and I should not be surprised if you would be given a public reception in view of the notable character of your services; for I can assure you, sir, that these have been highly appreciated by our chief."

Mr. Hiprah Hunt's account of his adventures was subsequently partially written out in seven hundred cantos. It was the original intention to publish these cantos intact; but space forbidding, they were turned over to a distinguished artist who has endeavored to tell the story in his own way in briefer space; and it is the artist's translation of the seven hundred cantos that will be given.



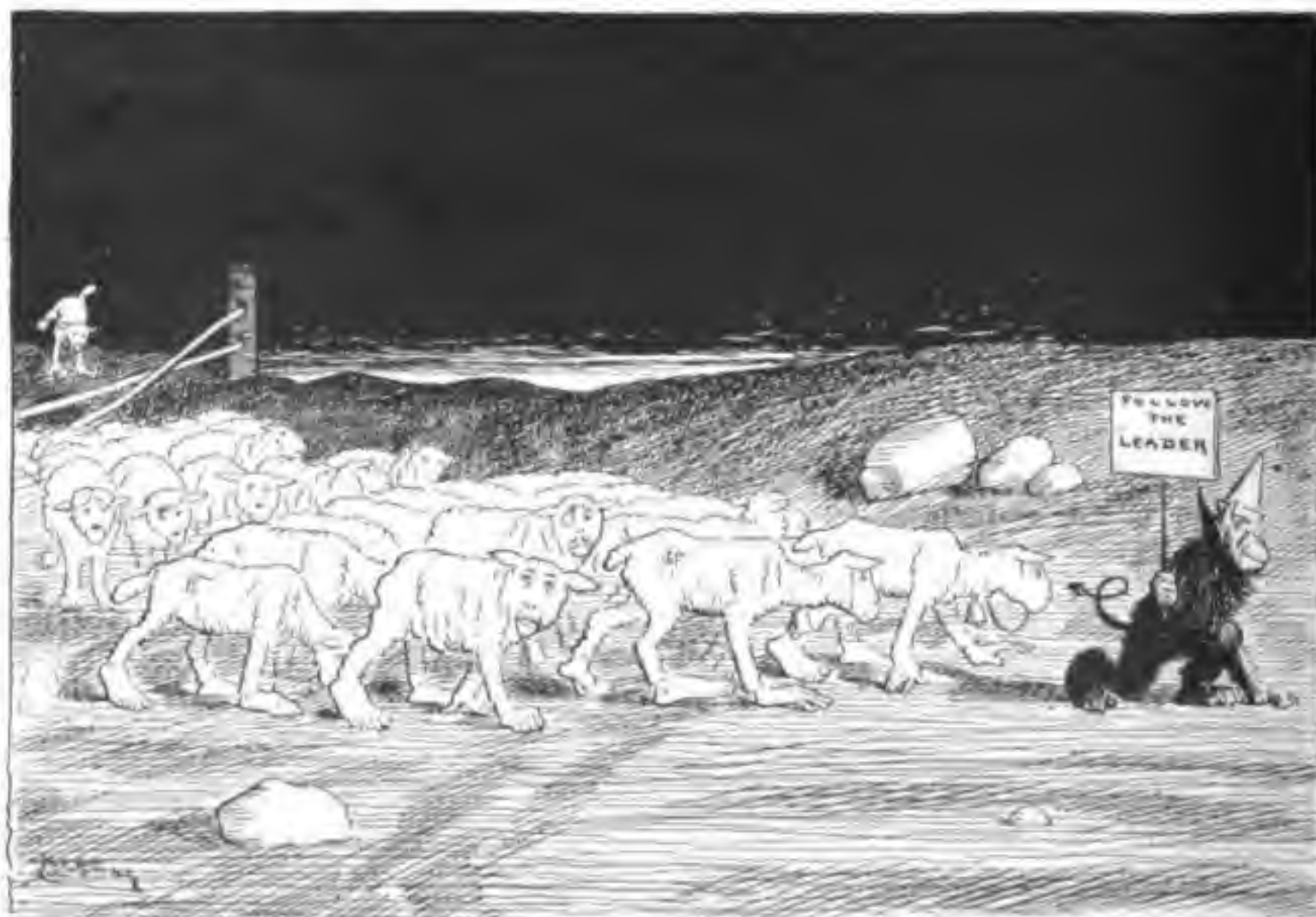


Copyright, 1900, by Arthur Young. MR. HUNT IS MET AT THE STATION BY THE PERSONAGE AND DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS.



*Copyright, 1906, by J. M. Young.*

THIS MAN WAS FOND OF PLAYING JOKES ON OTHERS, BUT GOT ANGRY WHEN THE JOKE WAS ON HIMSELF.



*Copyright, 1906, by J. M. Young.*

THEY NEVER THOUGHT FOR THEMSELVES.





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CONFIRMED WRITERS OF BAD POETRY.

(To be continued.)

HIPRAH HUNT'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE INFERNO.

II.

DEPICTED BY ARTHUR YOUNG.



Copyright, 1900, by Arthur Young.

MR. HUNT OBSERVES THE FATE OF THE HYPNOTIST.





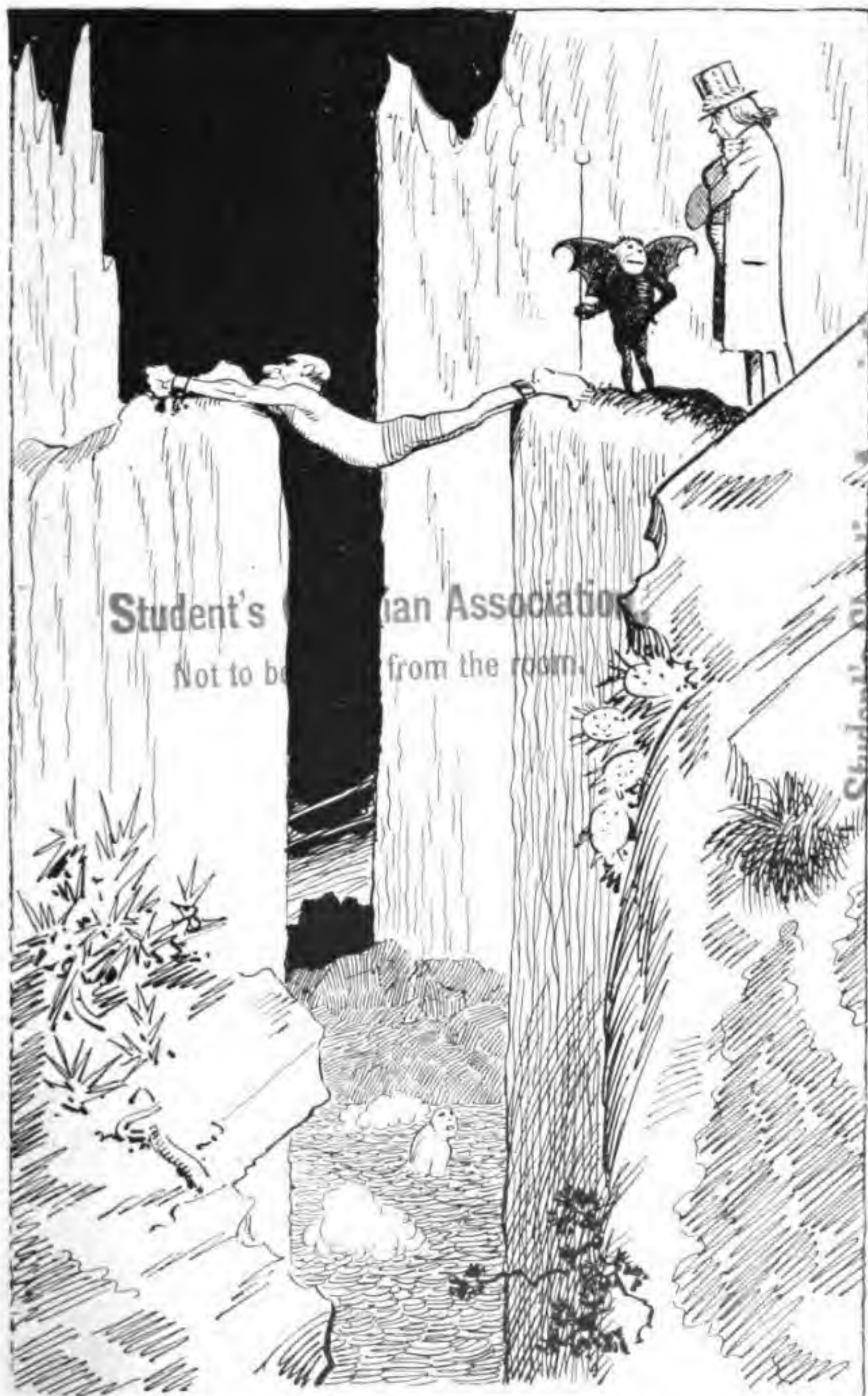
Student's Christian Association.

Not to be taken from the room.

Copyright 1900 by Hiprah Hunt.

THE MARRIED MAN WHO PASSED  
HIMSELF OFF AS SINGLE.

THE MAN WHO FORGOT TO BLANKET HIS HORSE.



Student's Christian Association

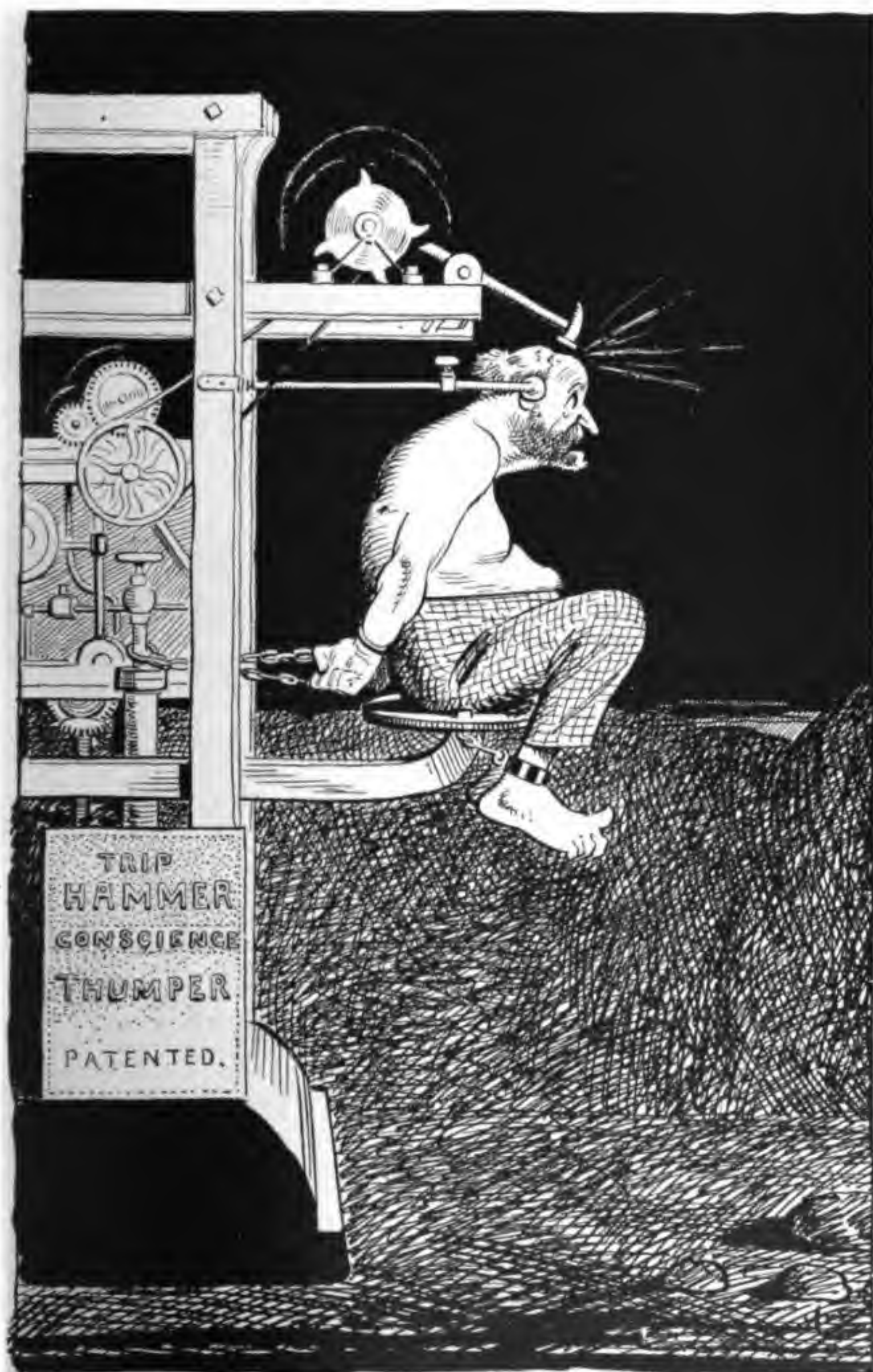
Not to be taken from the room.

Student's Christian Association,





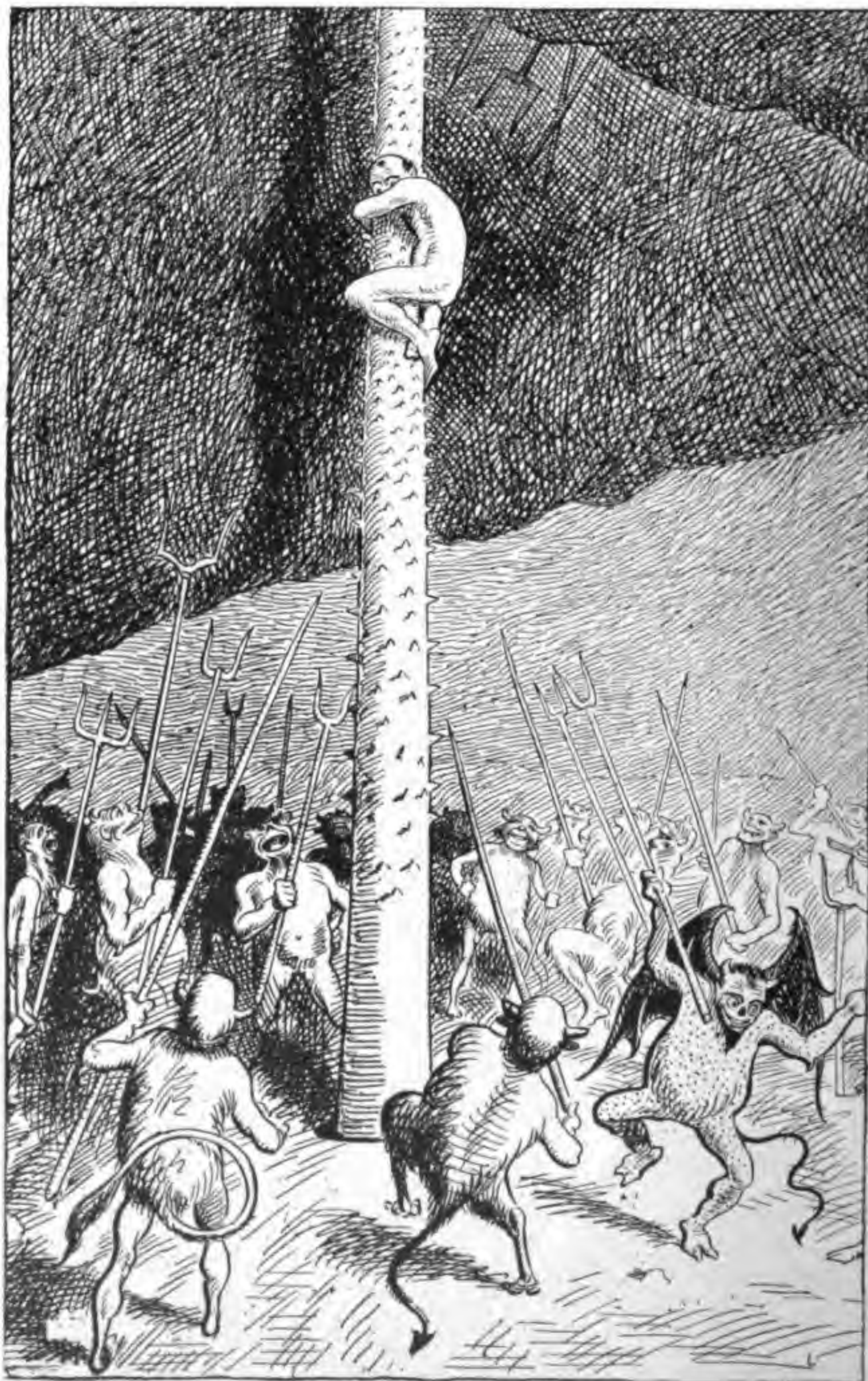
Copyright, 1900, by Arthur Young. THE STUBBORN RECEIVE THEIR REWARD.



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THE CAPITALIST WHOSE CONSCIENCE SLUMBERED.





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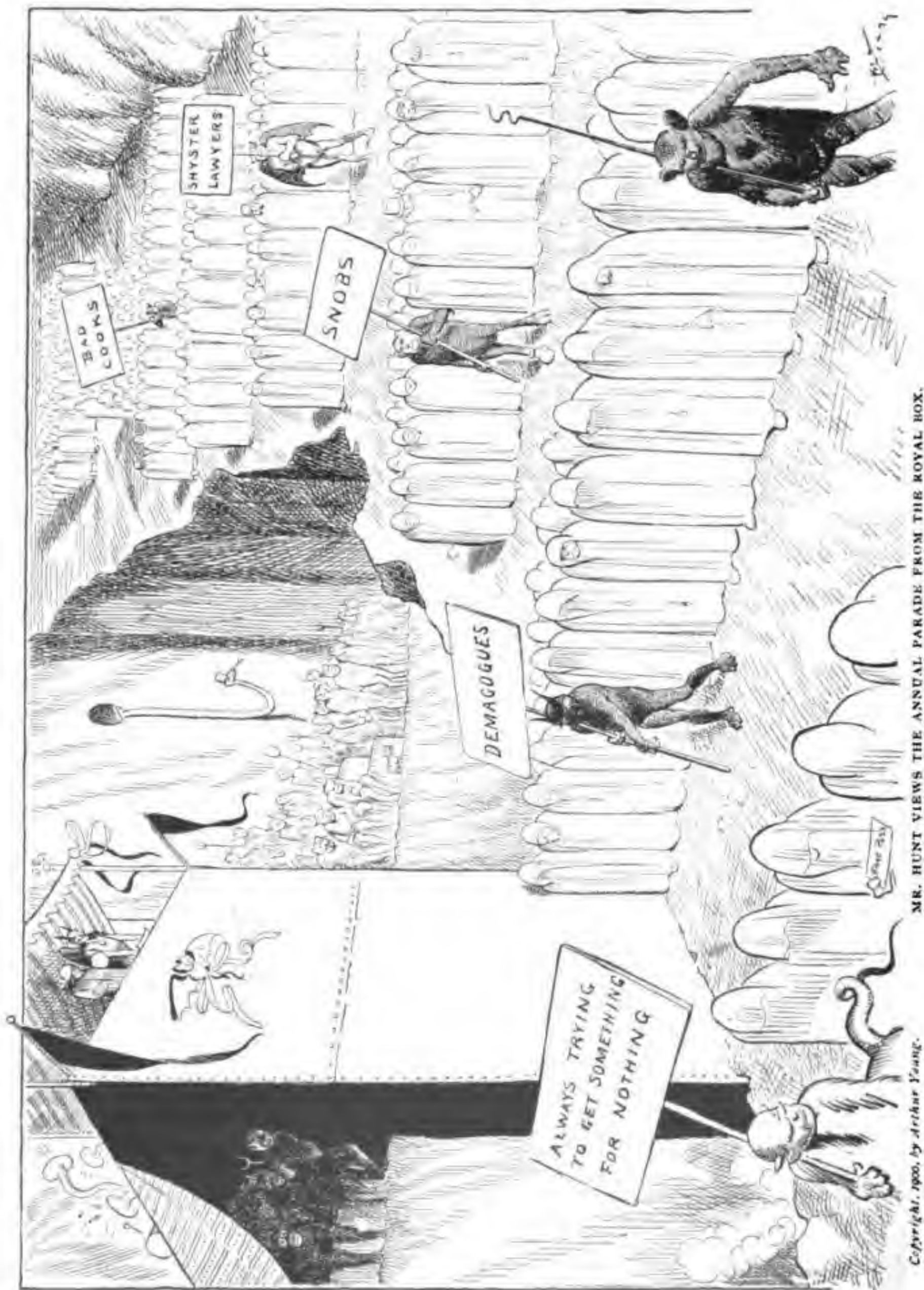
THE MAN WHO CLIMBED UP IN THE WORLD AND THEN FORGOT HIS FRIENDS.  
(To be continued.)



# HIPRAH HUNT'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE INFERNO.

## III.

DEPICTED BY ARTHUR YOUNG.



MR. HUNT VIEWS THE ANNUAL PARADE FROM THE ROYAL BOX.

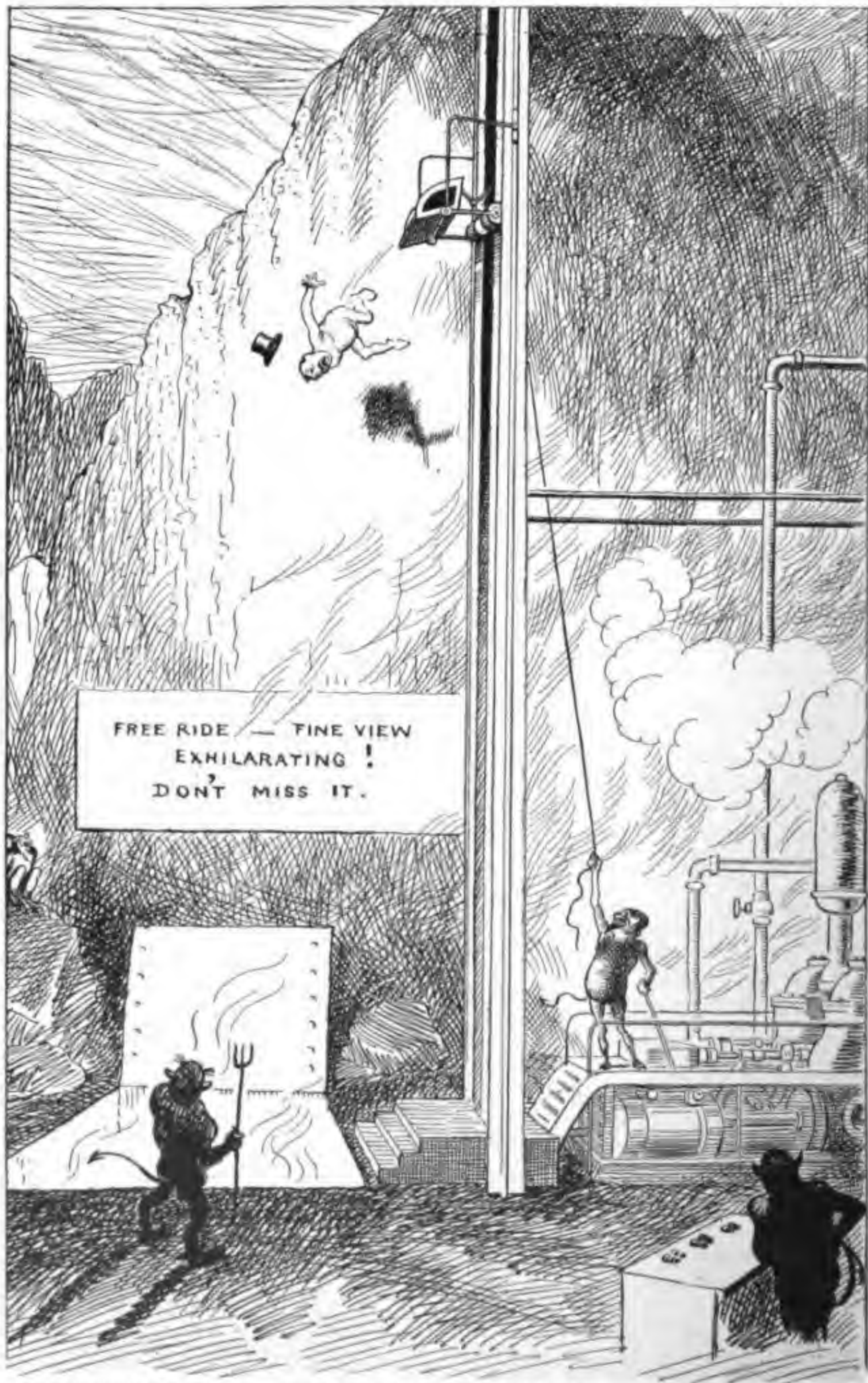
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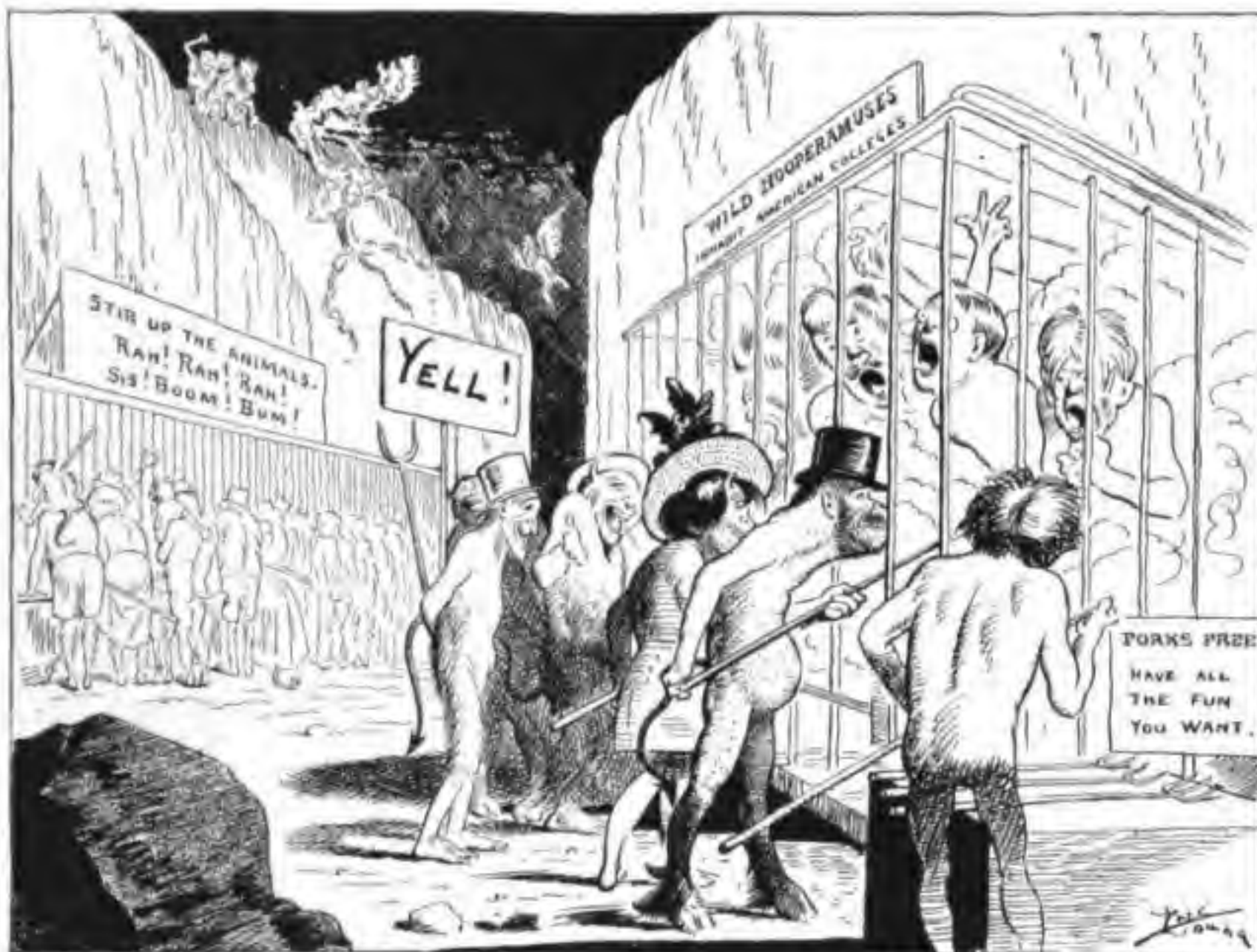


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THOSE WHO IN LIFE LAID THE BLAME ON OTHERS NOW LEARN WHAT IT IS TO BE  
HUNTED AS SCAPEGOATS.







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HOW THE COLLEGE-"MAN" NUISANCE IS TREATED.



Copyright, 1900, by Arthur Young.

A RIDE SUCH AS DANTE NEVER TOOK.



Copyright, 1900, by Arthur Young. MR. HUNT GAZES UPON THE SHRIVELED SOULS OF THOSE WHO WERE WONT TO BELITTLE OTHERS.

(To be continued.)



HIPRAH HUNT'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE INFERNO.

IV.

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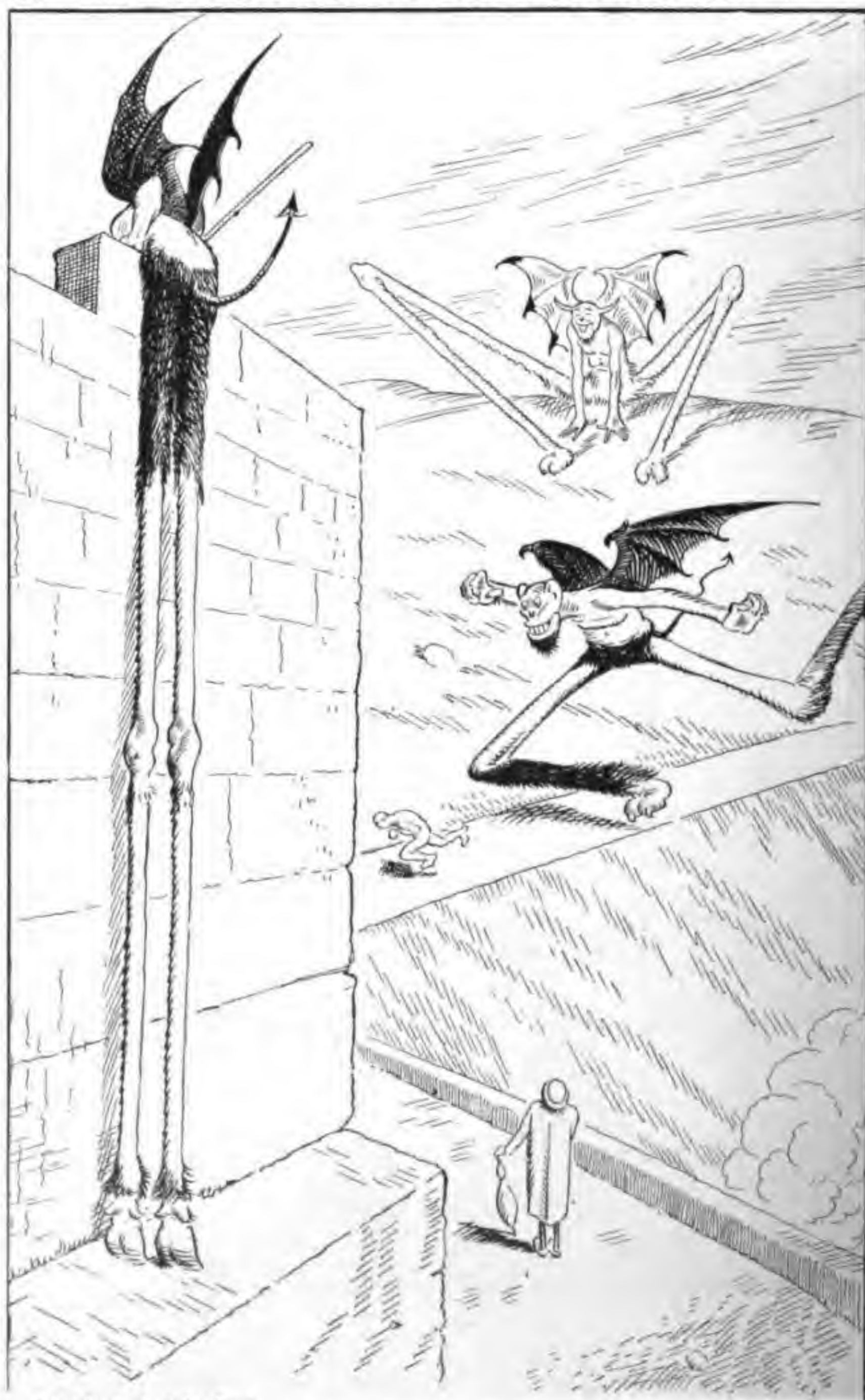
THE PENALTY FOR SWEARING.



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MR. HUNT AT THE THEATER. HE RECOGNIZES SEVERAL FAMILIAR TYPES.





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HOW CERTAIN RESTLESS SPIRITS AMUSE THEMSELVES.



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A WORD-EATING CONTEST FOR WICKLESS TALKERS.



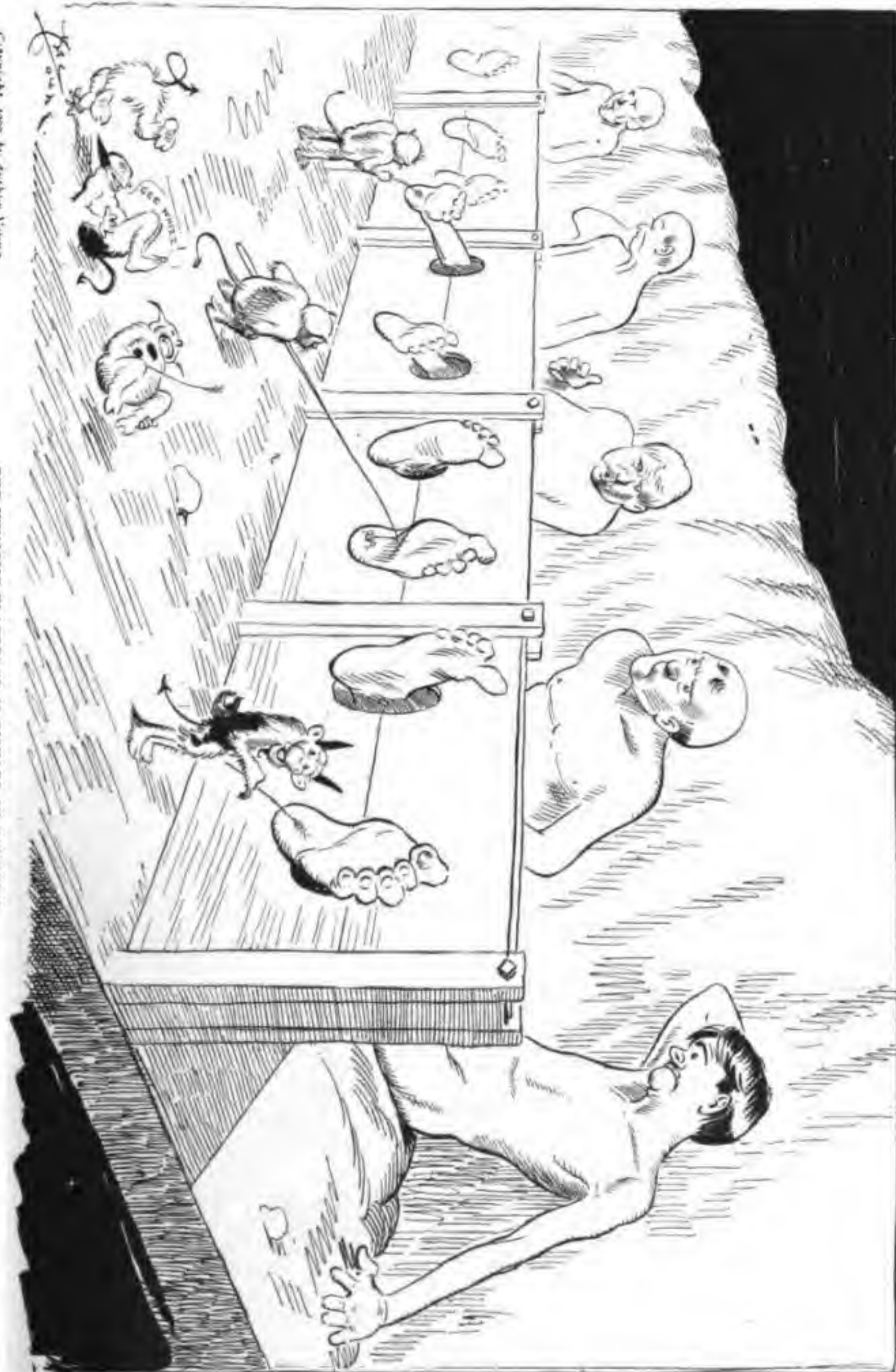


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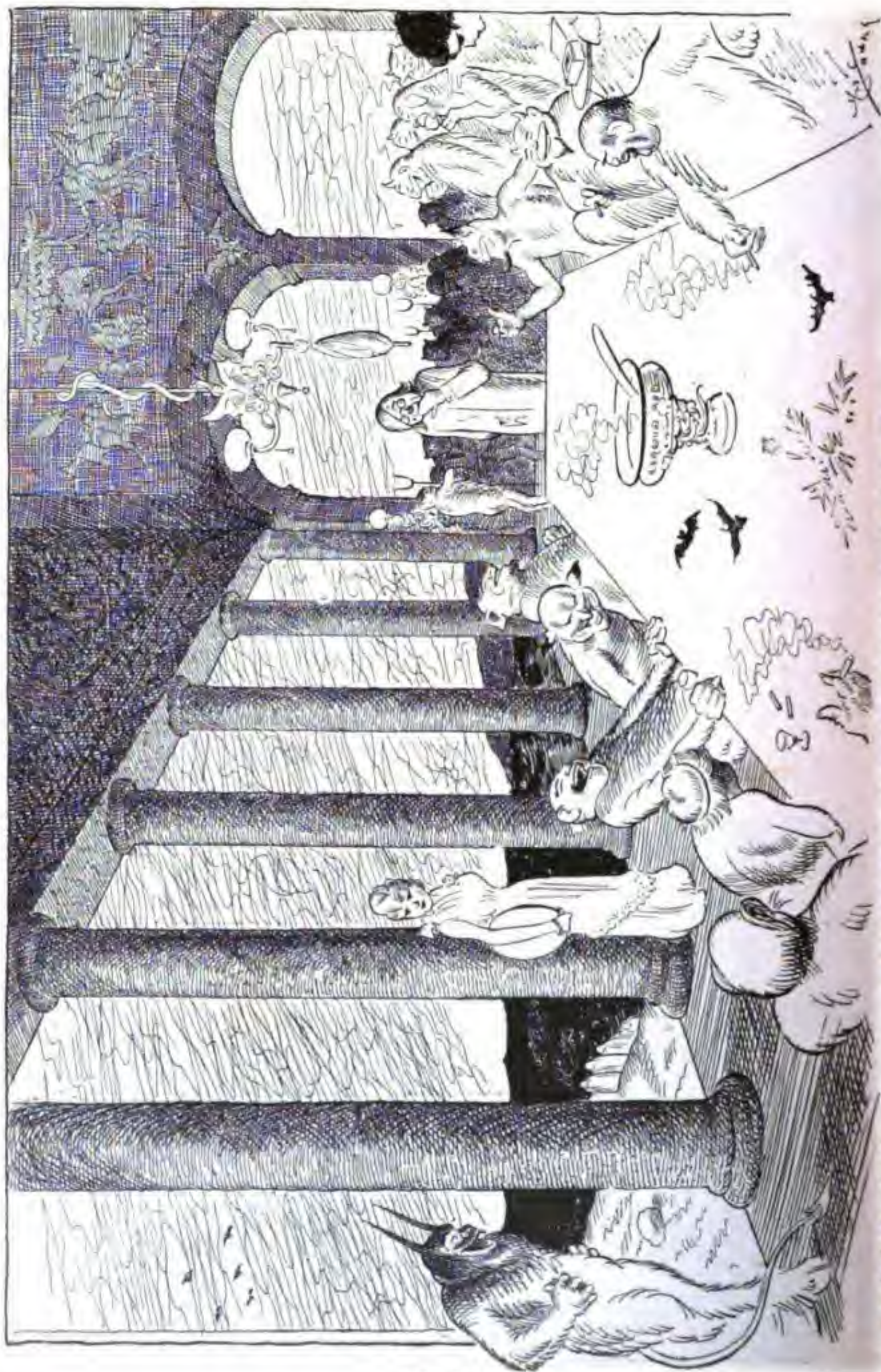
THE NATURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TIP SYSTEM.

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THE WINSOME FLATTERER IS TICKLED IN HIS TURN.







THE FAREWELL BANQUET AT THE PALACE IN HIPRAH HUNT'S HONOR.

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(The End.)



## MY CRANK CLIENT.

BY WARREN B. HUTCHINSON.

THE practice of my profession—I am a patent lawyer—certainly brings me in contact with more minds of a crotchety nature than it is the lot of the average man to encounter, and this, perhaps, has inclined me a little to the belief that every one of us is more or less insane on some subject. Business instinct, however, has taught me to meet all inventors with a grave face, even when their ideas seem ridiculous, for even the most unpromising client may possess something of value from both a financial and a scientific point of view.

With all my experience I should scarcely have classed as unpromising the man who followed upon the office-boy's appearance in my private room with the card of "Mr. John Robertson," one afternoon not long ago.

He was a fine-looking man, about forty, with big eyes placed wide apart, a light mustache, and well dressed; his manners were easy and his appearance was that of a prosperous professional man. This rather threw me off my guard.

"You have been recommended to me," he began at once, "as a lawyer capable of handling an important matter, and discreet enough to keep it absolutely quiet for the present. I know you must be pestered by cranks and my discovery will seem so nonsensical to you, if described, that I propose to give an ocular demonstration before going deep into the matter. Now," he continued, and he looked larger than ever, "I suppose you see me?"

I replied that I was quite sure of it.

"Well," he said, "you only think you see me," and with that he began to fade from sight and was soon lost to view.

I do not think that I was frightened, but I certainly felt queer. I sat staring at the spot where he had been and concluded that I must have fallen asleep and been dreaming. I looked out of the window and even got out of my seat to assure myself that I was awake. I do not believe in ghosts, and if I had seen one it was certainly very human and mortal. All sorts of fantastic ideas ran through my

head in the moment I stood there with my scattering hairs on end, and I cannot say that I felt reassured when the voice of Robertson said, "Now I suppose you will admit that you only thought you saw me." I managed to say that I would admit anything, but he continued, "Just come over to where I am sitting and take hold of me and you will see that there is nothing spiritual about me."

Of course it was foolish, but nothing would have persuaded me to make the attempt. His voice, however, sounded earthly and normal, and he said:

"Well, if you have no objection, I will try to take hold of you, but unfortunately, while I have perfected my invention to the extent of making myself invisible, it also prevents me from seeing clearly."

With that I heard him get up and knew he was groping like a blind man for me, and presently the dim outline of a hand seemed to come from nowhere and take hold of my coat. I confess that I felt like jumping out of the window and I know I trembled like a leaf.

Gradually Robertson began to reappear, and in a minute or two I beheld his form once more in the flesh.

I sank exhausted into my chair, and waited for him to speak.

He began precisely as if he had just explained a new sewing-machine, and in the oft-heard "Well, what do you think of my discovery?" I was wondering at him, and said as much. He laughed, as he continued:

"You are the first person to whom I have really shown my discovery, and you will shortly see that, like most important discoveries and inventions, it is so simple that I wonder it has not been known for ages. I did try it on my wife, but she went into hysterics, and I doubt if I ever regain my wonted place in her esteem till the invention is known and used by others. It is not entirely perfected yet, but the principle is that I am made invisible and also prevented from seeing people, yet I get glimpses of things which would never be seen by mortal vision. I wish now to



find out if my discovery is patentable, and if it is advisable to patent it. I know that many great discoveries do not prove remunerative, and I come for advice as to how mine can be made profitable. I hope through you to get men and money to patent and exploit it. Now, to satisfy you that I am neither angel nor devil, but a plain citizen of good character, I will say that I am principal of the high school at Grassville, and have been for the last five years. I refer you to the postmaster there, also to J. B. Hampton, Superintendent of Schools, and the Rev. Alfred Goodfellow, to verify my statements."

He paused. "You have shown me," said I, "that you can make yourself invisible; now please explain how you do it."

"You will pardon me," he replied, "but I wish you first to look me up and see that I am what I represent myself to be. I think the matter is of such importance that we should work together with mutual confidence. I have already satisfied myself as to you, and if you think it worth while, I wish you would take time to do this, and make another appointment."

"Very well. I certainly am interested in your invention. Suppose you come here at—let me see, to-day is Tuesday—say ten o'clock Saturday. Will that suit you?"

"Perfectly; and then we will go to the bottom of the matter."

He departed, and left me in a strange state.

As he went away, the boy advised me that Mr. Dupuy had been waiting a long time to see me. I had been owing Dupuy a matter of three hundred dollars for a year, and he was getting importunate. The value of Robertson's invention at once appealed to me as it had not done before. I meant to pay Dupuy, but was not able. I dreaded to be dunned, particularly as I had promised repeatedly to pay, but I had a bright idea which I thought would relieve me of Dupuy till I could pull myself together financially, and I got rid of him after a short interview in which I promised a check in full if he would come back the following Saturday morning at ten.

Next day I went to Grassville, half expecting to find that Robertson was un-

known, but learned that he was a staid, respectable citizen who was well known and had made no miraculous disappearances.

I neglected everything for the next two days and anxiously waited for Saturday and Robertson.

He was as punctual as the day. Dupuy was on hand, too. They came in together.

"Good-morning, Mr. Robertson," said I, as they entered. "I am glad to say that I find you are of the earth, earthy."

"Good; then there is no earthly reason why we should not get down to business."

"I will see you presently, Dupuy; have a chair," I called, as the door of my private office closed behind Robertson and myself.

"Mr. Robertson," I began, "you will excuse the digression, but would it be possible to make me disappear before the eyes of that man outside? There are particular reasons why I should like to do this."

"If you think it advisable to let any one see what we can do before protecting the invention, yes."

"Well, I can guarantee that no harm will come of it, for Dupuy could learn nothing of the invention, and he would never dare mention what he sees, or rather doesn't see, for he knows any one to whom he repeated it would say he was drunk or crazy."

"All right, then; I expected that you would wish to experiment a little, and so brought along a duplicate apparatus which I can attach to you and operate from a bulb in my pocket; or, if you prefer, I will apply the attachment to you, connect yours with mine, and we will both vanish."

"Very well, let us both disappear, and I will wager that there will be a third disappearance without the use of your apparatus."

Robertson opened a small bag which he had brought and took out several loops of insulated wire provided with numerous fine projections.

"I shall have to attach these temporarily," he said. "They may be seen, but will be hardly noticed. You do not see anything unusual about me, for I have the attachments inside my clothing, but the points project through slightly."

He quickly fitted a loop to each of my



trouser-legs near the bottom, another around my waist, and another to my coat-collar. I began to have an inkling of how the trick was done. He then connected wires to the several loops and to some parts of his own harness, and placed himself so that I was between him and the door.

"I am ready now," he said, "but will try it and see if everything is all right," and immediately I was enveloped in a cylinder of light through which I could not see. The sensation was peculiar, but momentary, as soon as he permitted normal conditions to obtain.

"Now, when shall we obliterate ourselves?" he said.

"Can you do it rather slowly?"

"Certainly."

"Then as soon as Dupuy comes in and I begin to speak to him, let us fade out gradually. Are you ready?"

"Yes."

I signaled the boy. "Harry, show Mr. Dupuy in."

Dupuy seated himself and I said: "I believe it is three hundred and ten dollars that I owe you. Am I right?"

As I said the last three words, Dupuy, who had been fading, disappeared from my sight. I shall never forget the last glimpse I had of him as he sat there before me bolt upright, his eyes distended, his mouth open, his hair on end. Before I could begin speaking, I heard the door jerked open and knew that he had fled. I called after him, but he had left the office.

About a week after this incident, I saw him coming down Broadway, but when he saw me he bolted across the street. I am quite sure he has never mentioned what occurred, and do not believe he could be induced to come near me. I have since sent him a check.

I was mean enough to stand off several troublesome creditors in this way, but I have since paid them all. It was my only recourse, and it was well for them, for it gave me an opportunity to get my affairs in better condition and to pay them all in full. I have never heard that any of them ever mentioned what happened and I know that none of them has mentioned it to me.

As soon as Dupuy had gone, Robertson turned off the current—for by this time I

understood that it was an electric phenomenon—and we were together in the room again. I stepped to the door and asked the boy if Dupuy had left. With a very peculiar expression upon his face, he remarked that the gentleman had fairly run through the room only a moment before.

I now took up the matter with Robertson and suggested that it might be well for him to explain the invention, or discovery.

"Well," said Robertson, "I make no pretense of being an expert on matters relating to vision, but I have accepted the theory advanced by some that light-waves travel in a series of electrical impulses or oscillations, in a way similar to that in which sound is transmitted. Knowing how the transmission of sound can be prevented from going any great distance by simply making a break in the medium, it occurred to me that if I could polarize or deflect light-waves or oscillations, I should make myself invisible. I knew just enough about electricity to understand that it follows, like water, the easiest course, and therefore that if I could produce an electric current or currents of greater strength than that carrying the light-waves, and in a direction at an angle to the rays of light, such rays would therefore be deflected and my object attained.

"The next step was, of course, to provide a medium by which the transverse electric currents could be produced. From reading of the experiments in wireless telegraphy, I found that electric impulses could be made to travel through the air, and I first tried to make the current pass between terminals placed above and below my face, thinking that I might obtain the desired effect, but the result was disappointing. I then conceived the idea of providing a volatile and easily projected conductor which would serve as a medium to carry the transverse currents, and after long experiments I succeeded in discovering such a substance. The rest was easy. I, as you see, simply provide small loops, which, however, are hollow and which are insulated. They are fastened to my clothing at suitable intervals and the projections which you have noticed serve as electrical conductors and are also little jets through which my volatile conductor is forced. In my pockets are two small storage-batteries



which can be connected with the several loops, and I also have a rubber vessel containing a conductor and an ordinary collapsible bulb for forcing the conductor through minute flexible tubes to the loops and out through the jets. The pressure from the bulb serves also to work the switch for turning on and off the current, and the nature of the volatile conductor is such that it does not at once mingle with the air, and so by keeping a fine spray of this material about my person, I become incased, as it were, in a mist, which also carries the electrical currents and these deflect the electric light pulsations, thus obscuring me; but the light is not shut out, and as you have seen, I appear to be contained in a translucent cylinder when the currents are on. So much for the mechanical part of the invention."

Robertson then proceeded to explain the nature of the volatile conductor, but I am not at present at liberty to make it public, for reasons which will hereafter appear.

"Now," said he, resuming, "if this is patentable, it seems to me it should be patented all over the world, which will take a good deal of money, and besides I wish to carry on further experiments, because, as I intimated to you the other day, I find that under certain conditions I see things when my invention is in use which nobody would ever see with the human eyesight, and about which I do not wish to talk much until I have given you the opportunity to see them. What do you think about the whole thing?"

"There can," I replied, "be no question that your invention is new, and also that it possesses a good deal of utility; but I have some doubts about the advisability of patenting it, and I question also whether the Patent Office or the courts would permit or sustain a patent for the invention."

"What possible objection can there be?"

"Simply upon the ground that it would be against public policy. Of course, it has already occurred to you that if this were known to a certain extent, it would prove a boon for fake mediums, who would be giving materializing séances and rob the public of its money. The thief could pick a pocket and immediately pass from sight. The murderer could easily

escape. In fact, it would give criminals immunity from arrest."

Robertson's face fell, and I could see that he doubted the probability of making much money out of the invention, but I continued:

"There is, however, another side to the question, and it seems to me that you can get all the fame and we can get all the money desired without the protection of the Patent Office. Instead of making the invention a cloak for criminals, it could be used by government officers to ferret out crimes. If it were kept secret and used solely by the government, who could have the conductor made by only a few trusted people, it would enable the United States Army to march unseen to victory, for I take it that the obscurity of the individual can be overcome sufficiently to permit him to move, at least when properly guided. I see no reason why the principle cannot be applied to naval and other vessels, so that, when beset by the enemy, the vessel could be made invisible. In fact, the secret employment of this invention by the government would be of such inestimable value that I believe we can, by bringing it quietly to the attention of the right people, easily arrange to get all the money we want. I suggest that we make an arrangement to lay the matter before the Secretary of War or else the Secretary of the Navy, and we can introduce ourselves by the same means you introduced yourself to me, and be sure at least of making an impression."

We discussed the details of such an arrangement and agreed to proceed to Washington at an early date to pursue the matter on the lines I have mentioned. I then suggested to Robertson that I was consumed with curiosity to get a peep at the invisible things he had mentioned.

"To do this," he replied, "I use a little different preparation in the way of the volatile conductor from that which I now have, and I am still experimenting with the conductor, as the results so far are imperfect and unreliable; that is to say, I cannot always tell when I am going to produce the desired results, but when conditions are right I get them. As soon as I can find just what these right conditions are, I shall have solved the difficulty."



I agreed to go to Grassville on the following Monday to have Robertson experiment with me in an effort to make me see the things at which he had hinted.

I could not keep Robertson's invention from my mind. At length Monday came and I started for Grassville on time. I had no difficulty in finding my man. It was vacation-time and he was at home. He introduced me to his wife, explaining that I was a lawyer associated with him in the finishing and exploiting of his invention. She thought the invention wonderful, but said that by it she had lost a husband, as for a long time such an ordinary affair as a wife had been of no interest whatever to him. She hoped that the perfection of the invention would restore her husband.

Robertson took me to an upper room which he used as a workroom, and we proceeded at once to business.

"Now," said he, "you will be the subject and we shall see what we shall see, but that may be nothing. I have to get both current and conductor exactly right or there is no result."

He adjusted the attachments with extra care, turned on the current, and I was half blinded by a series of flashes as if the sun had been reflected from a mirror into my eyes.

He made another attempt, after a readjustment, and I was closed into the usual cell of light. We made numerous trials with no new result.

At length, after several failures, I was transported. My descriptive powers are limited and I cannot tell what I saw, but it was a new world. Like a flash it dawned on me. The light was all at once soft and yet so clear that it seemed as if I could see far out into space. I remember one beautiful morning in May after a ride through the woods and behind the hills, after climbing a sharp pitch and following a bend in the road, coming unexpectedly into the open, and seeing the whole upper valley of the Delaware bright with color and stretching away like the Land of Promise into the blue distance. It had always seemed as if nothing could be so beautiful, but what I now saw as much transcended that former scene as did that the rear view from a New York flat. The

scope of vision seemed unlimited. The walls of the house seemed not to interfere with sight. But what impressed me was first the wonderful beauty, and next the fact that the most of what I saw comprised things that I had never seen or conceived, things that I could not even name.

There were living beings, and as I became accustomed to the new conditions, I was amazed and delighted to see an old scientific friend of mine who was eagerly watching the performance and smiled as he saw that I recognized him. All at once something went wrong, again I was buried in a wall of light and the next instant back with mortals. I looked blankly at Robertson. I was too much moved to speak.

Finally he said:

"Did you see anything unusual?"

"Mr. Robertson, will you be honest with me, and answer a question before I answer you?"

"I think so; go ahead."

"Are you a mortal man?"

"You are as bad as my wife. I am afraid from certain trouble that I have with my heart that I am very mortal, as the term is generally used, but I have seen enough to rob death of any terrors it ever had. I am anxious, however, before I die to leave this invention in a perfected condition. When I have seen what you have probably seen, I do not care for money. At other times I am anxious to provide for those I leave behind."

"Have you," I asked, "ever seen, when using the apparatus, people that you knew had died?"

"Yes, on many occasions."

"How do you account for it?"

"I see but one way to account for it. It must be that in our present condition we see imperfectly, are not perhaps sufficiently developed to see more than a small part of the earth, and do not yet comprehend the fact that the chief beauties have not yet been discovered. Facts and truths have always existed but we have been ages in finding out the few we have. And doubtless this discovery of mine is only one of many yet to take place, but I think it opens the door to a new world. The man who has spent his day in a coal-mine knows nothing of the beauties of nature. If we should take him to a mount-



ain-top the revelation would be akin to that you had flashed on you, and yet you probably caught but a glimpse of what may be seen. Then again, our eyes, according to the oculists, convey to the brain sight-sensations of only such things as serve as mirrors to reflect light, and obviously such things can form but a part of the things that be."

"Well," said I, "I saw an old friend of mine, apparently much interested in this performance, but I did not hear him speak. Do you think that some analogous apparatus is necessary to make us hear things not heard under normal conditions?"

"I am forced to that conclusion, and intend to try and work it out as soon as I can perfect my present invention. In my opinion, when people have seen and heard departed friends, it has been when conditions happened to prevail which are similar to those I hope to obtain at will."

We discussed these affairs at some length and gradually got back to present conditions.

Robertson instructed me in the apparatus, and told me more of the composition and manufacture of the volatile conductor.

The Washington trip was arranged for; it was decided that we should go in about ten days, which would give Robertson time to make several sets of apparatus, and to carry his experiments further.

We started armed and equipped and could not resist the opportunity of having a little fun, resolved not to carry it far enough to make ourselves too conspicuous, or rather inconspicuous. We took a parlor-car at Jersey City and arranged our chairs facing each other so that we could easily converse. In a short time the conductor came along, and as he reached for my ticket, I went out, but flashed instantly back to view in time to see him straighten up and put his hand to his eyes. He looked startled, but said nothing.

As he reached for Robertson's ticket, Robertson repeated the trick, and this time the conductor straightened up with a snap, turned white and looked frightened.

"Is anything the matter?" I asked.

"I didn't know that there was, but I seem to have blind spells. I had the queerest sensation just now that I ever had

in my life, and for a moment I couldn't see."

"It is probably indigestion," I said, "or perhaps you are bilious. Why don't you take something for your liver?"

We considerably refrained from any further demonstration lest we should make him really sick. We did not wish to attract too much attention, and only tested our apparatus further in the dining-car.

The waiter spread the table and brought some oysters.

"Waiter," said Robertson, as he disappeared, "these oysters are out of sight."

This disposition of Robertson's to pun was the worst thing I had seen in him.

"For de Lawd's sake!" said the darkey, and dropped the tray and soup he was bringing.

I heard the head waiter rebuke him sharply, and the darkey responded:

"Dat dar man's a hoodoo; he got de evil eye."

"Go 'long, you fool," said the head waiter, "and be more careful." But the waiter refused to serve us, even under threat of discharge.

Another came. He seemed a little nervous, and went about his work reluctantly. Finally I asked him to pass something to me, and as he did so, I obliterated myself for a minute. Well, he was the most frightened man I ever saw. He could not speak. As I came back, he managed to get away, but he refused to come near us after that.

Unfortunately, a young woman in the next seat happened to be looking at me when I disappeared, and she fainted. She was a fine-looking woman, and I would not have disappeared had I known she was looking at me.

We knew that we attracted general suspicion and ought to have stopped here, but when the head waiter timidly approached to ascertain the cause of so much confusion and alarm, Robertson faded out. This was too much. Those nearest the exit end of the car left at once without paying their bills, and every one ceased eating. The waiters were terror-stricken.

The head waiter had sufficient presence of mind to beg me to take my friend and depart.

I saw that we had made a mistake, and



we paid our bill; the head waiter trembled as he took the money. I handed him a dollar each for the two discomfited waiters, though I doubt if they would touch the money.

At the hotel we were our usual selves.

I knew, of course, the necessity of a good introduction to enable a matter to be properly presented to a Cabinet officer, but resolved to make our apparatus introduce us.

I had, however, letters from different influential people to help when we got down to business.

The next morning we tested the apparatus which we wore, took a bag containing several sets and repaired to the Navy Department. I had learned that the Secretary of the Navy was in town and planned the visit so as to be reasonably sure of finding him.

To the young man who asked what he could do for us, I presented a card and said I wished to see the Secretary of the Navy on very important business.

He advised me presently that this was impossible, but that Mr. Brown would see me.

I replied that he might and might not, but that I should be glad to talk with him a moment.

The young man gave me a peculiar look and I faded out before him, remarking that he could judge for himself as to whether Mr. Brown could see me.

Of course, he was mystified, but he saw Mr. Brown, probably gave him the tip that the devil or some other imp wished to see him, and shortly presented me. I introduced Robertson and said:

"Mr. Brown, we are not cranks, as your assistant may have advised you, but come here with a most important discovery which we think should be placed at the service of the government without delay. We have no log-rolling to do, but propose to let our discovery be our sponsor. I know the manner in which all public officers are annoyed, but we ask nothing except to show what we have, and if the Secretary wishes us to depart on the instant, we will do so."

"What is the discovery?" asked Brown. "I can perhaps tell you how to bring it in the regular way before the Department,

but it is impossible for you to see the Secretary."

"Do you think it is as difficult as it would be for him to see me?" said I, as I faded. Robertson faded too. Brown did not answer.

"What do you think about it?" said I, still an airy nothing.

"I don't know what to think," said he, apparently forgetting everything.

I came back and found Brown standing in open-mouthed astonishment. I saw, too, that every clerk had left his duties and was looking at me, while others were peering through the doors.

Before more could be said, a gentleman came to one of the doors to ascertain the cause of the confusion. Some one addressed him as Mr. Black, and I knew then that he was the Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

"Mr. Black," said I, "my client here whom you cannot see"—at this he looked very knowing and I thought winked at one of the head clerks—"has a discovery or invention which it seemed to me should be at once brought without formality before the government. To save myself from the suspicion of being a crank, and you from being bored, I shall request my client to appear. Mr. Robertson, will you allow yourself to be presented?"

The big form of Robertson flashed at once to view. The faces of Mr. Black and the rest were a study.

I then faded and said: "Mr. Black, this is not a séance, and we are not wizards. Do you think anything further is necessary to make the importance of the invention manifest?"

Mr. Black is a very smart man. "Come in this way," said he, and in a few minutes we were closeted with himself and the Secretary.

To tell all that passed would be to repeat with modifications what has already been related.

I explained fully the working of the invention, and some of its uses. The latter the Secretary saw, however, before I mentioned them.

"Black," said he, "just imagine the feelings of the commander of an inferior fleet to find all at once and without warn-



ing that he was surrounded by powerful battle-ships which had dropped from a clear sky or risen from the depths, with guns in position to sink him. For if he was sighted, the battle-ships could go out of sight, steer by compass, and easily come up to him. How easy for a vessel to escape, on the other hand; or how handily big batteries could be passed."

Still I could see that he thought there must be something wrong about the matter, so I persuaded him to try the apparatus, and soon he was enthusiastic.

He turned to me sharply.

"How many people know of this invention?"

"Only myself and Robertson."

"Are you certain of this?"

"Yes."

"Haven't you applied for a patent?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Because if it were patented, foreign nations could after seeing the specifications practise the invention as well as we could, and it seemed to us that the United States government should have the sole use of the invention."

"That is right," said he. "Where are you staying?"

I mentioned the hotel.

"Well," said he, "I want you to promise me on your honor that you will neither of you make any further exhibits of this invention, that you will mention it to no one, and that you will keep reasonably close to the hotel until you hear from me."

I readily promised and we departed.

That afternoon I received a note from the Secretary asking us to meet him at a certain place the next day, and to bring our apparatus and be prepared for a full explanation.

Of course, we kept the appointment, but what was our surprise to find that we were to meet the President and Cabinet! We were at first a little embarrassed, but were shortly relieved to find that the people we met were like other men. In fact, they had great sport with the apparatus, and it of course led to all kinds of speculation.

We were delighted to find that in the opinion of all, the government should own the secret. But the difficulty lay in keeping the secret while practising the invention.

Finally the matter was left with the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of War, and it was arranged that we should meet them the next morning.

This we did. The Cabinet officers were afraid that it would be difficult to keep the matter secret, but decided that it would be better to take some chances than to run the risk of losing the invention altogether. So, to make a long story short, it was arranged that Robertson should write out the formula of the conductor, which should be in the custody of the Secretary of the Navy; that Robertson and myself should give as much time as should be required to fit vessels, individuals, et cetera, with the apparatus; that we should prepare the volatile conductor when required in the presence of a government officer; that we should receive ten thousand dollars a year each for our services while in government employ; that we should receive fifty thousand dollars down, to be paid from an emergency fund; and that as soon as authority could be obtained, we should receive a million dollars for the invention.

The first part of the contract was carried out; we received our fifty thousand dollars and entered into government employ, to which most of my time is now given.

But the good fortune was too much for Robertson. Just before we were to start for home, as he was sitting talking to me, he suddenly clutched his breast, stiffened himself and died without a word.

Now comes the strangest part of the whole matter. After making the proper disposition of Robertson's remains, I went on with the government experiments. As long as the conductor we had on hand lasted, they were eminently satisfactory, but it soon gave out.

I had helped prepare it, and a government expert had also seen it prepared, but when we tried it ourselves something was wrong. We have worked at it for months without result. The officials have despaired, but I still think that Robertson was honest and only some trifling thing is necessary to make our experiments successful. I even hope to get that finer adjustment which will enable me to see him watching the experiments, as I have no doubt he does, and even to go farther and hear him explain all he knows about it.



## THE LADY OF LA JEUNESSE.

BY O'NEILL LATHAM.

*Illustrated by the author.*

EVENING had fallen upon the enchanted country of La Jeunesse; in the halls of the forest the afterglow of the sunset lingered, the light of revery, the light of dreams. The wind was faint, the sleepy flowers unstirred. Suddenly a lusty call broke the entranced quiet, the cry of a young man first at the tryst, perplexed and listening, peering at his watch, beating his leg with his walking-stick and breathing maledictions upon the gods. Ah, there had been a time when she appeared upon the summons!

At last a whispering sound was discernible down the glade, the strain of a voice lowly singing as women who love sing in solitude, and the rustle of leaves beneath an elfin footfall. The young fellow leaped forward like a stag.

"You are late," he cried.

"But how should I know you would come?" she smiled; "and why are you still keeping the tryst with me, a creature of air? You are already a man and soon to put off childish things. Then why do you yet seek out me, who am of such stuff as dreams are made of?"

"You have extremely airy ideas of yourself," he said; "and I must admit that you seem to me like some divine emanation rather than a thing of flesh and blood."

"But," she persisted, "why are you here?"

"Behold," he replied, indignantly, "I have served you all the days of my youth!"

"True," she said, with an averted look. They began to ascend the flank of an eminence that terminated the stretches of the glade. To help her, he took her hand, but as he clasped it, it eluded him.

"Why does your hand fade in mine like mist? A year ago it was warm and material enough."

"Oh, but you were younger. You believed in me mightily then," she said. "Soon you will have even less faith than now, and when you believe no more at all, then I shall be no more at all. Then I shall fade and fail and fall and lie with withered flowers all, the broken dreams of youth my pall—when you believe no more at all."

"Are you aware that you are talking in rhyme, my dear?" he expostulated. "It's a very bad habit and far from cheerful. What on earth do you mean by saying that you will die?"

"I shall die," she replied, with infinite sadness. "But," and she laid her hands over her eyes to hide the joy her trembling lips betrayed, "other boys' hearts shall re-create me as long as flowers grow in the hills of La Jeunesse." She continued with a little laugh: "What fun we have had when you were a boy playing among these hills! I was a Princess, dragon-besieged. On how many splendid occasions have I owed you my life and rewarded your chivalry with my hand! Now my station is hardly so exalted. You grow so wise."

She halted. "See how far we have climbed. Shall I be frail and beg a pause to breathe?—or, if you prefer, I can skip on to the summit of the cliffs without a



Illustration by the author.  
Not to be taken from the  
Latham's Christian Association.





quicken heart-beat. I am what you would, a thing of fragility or of power."

"Be fragile now, and lean on me," he said. She shook her head.

"I shall see if your waist is not less immaterial than your hand," he cried. "Your arms, too, had substance once. Let me feel them around my neck."

He seized her, and for one moment could have sworn he experienced the pressure of her body upon his heart; the next, with his arms still locked, he beheld her dancing up the path ahead, like a snowflake in the wind, her scarf floating above her head, discovering her shoulders as white as foam.

He gave chase and at last found her at the summit, looking out into the sky where the moon gleamed among the flying clouds, silvering the tops of the shadowy trees and the battlements of the Spanish castles which towered here and there upon the rocks.

"Well, my dear girl, there is no accounting for your foibles," he panted, his ardors

greatly calmed by the abrupt ascent.

"Ah, but behold the glories of the high places to which I have led you." Her face was beatific as she spoke.

"Very pretty, indeed," said he, "but an unconscionably warm climb."

He took a field-glass from its case and began gazing at the lights of a city which reared its steeples remotely in the lowlands beneath them.

"As always, using that wretched glass," she cried, springing to his side. "Always gazing, gazing beyond the boundaries! I wish the binocular weren't so fashionable here. There is not an inhabitant of La Jeunesse that doesn't carry one!"

She stretched her arms to him with a passionate gesture.

"Ah, don't you know you are looking away from your youth—you are looking away from me?"

"I love that splendid city," he rejoined. "It is the place of my manhood, my fuller life, my big endeavors, you know. Soon, soon I shall joyfully leave these hills, but I shall bear you with me as I go."

She gave a little painful sound and shook her head. "Here in this place of dreams I live. When you go there, there you will find a mate, one who can survive in the lower air. But—

"I am the Woman Ideal, never on earth to be. These women of clay are the Real, but only shadows of me.

My lips but in dreams you feel, my beauty in dreams you see.

I am the Woman Ideal, they are but shadows of me."

"You talk wildly, my dear creature," he protested. "Do you know, it has seemed to me, of late, that you grow a trifle emotional."

"As the time approaches when I shall not suffice," she murmured, apologetically. "It is always a little hard for me—at first." Her eyes were on the ground, melancholy and patient.

"By Jove, my dear girl, you talk like an old woman!"

"I am as old as the world. Thousands upon thousands of years have seen me loved and forsaken. I am the Ariadne of the ages."

"You are always speaking in parables,"





"OF SUCH STUFF AS DREAMS ARE MADE OF."





he said, impatiently. "But," he added, "you are absolutely the loveliest in the world."

She had the appearance of glowing out of the dusk for a moment, of actually becoming more fully visible.

"You are the incomparable sweetest, but—" He hesitated. Sundry images passed before his mental vision, while warm, material hands clasped his own and seemed to promise. "But," he cried at last, "you're so deucedly insubstantial, my dear!"

She faded into the shadow again, standing a pale, translucent figure in the moonlight.

"There you go," he said. "It would be fine and comfortable to have a wife that all but disappears on the slightest provocation."

She blushed, much embarrassed, for it could not be denied that such a habit has never been the practice among the most amiable and discreet wives in polite society.

"I cannot defend it," she pleaded, with

meekness, "but if you could only have faith in me as you used, I think I could remain quite apparent, and indeed, almost tangible. Oh, don't you remember how when you were a little fellow rescuing me from feudal barons and outlaws, how you *almost really* carried me, and kissed me—*almost actually*—kissed me at the end? Ah, I lived then, I lived. You believed in me so!"

He lowered his eyelids to hide the foolish tears. It was true that he had served her all the days of his youth.

"You were my little love, earliest and best. But now," he continued, sternly, "now, why do you withdraw yourself from me? Why are you remote and vague? Why do I kiss the empty air? You ask all of me—for what? A vision. Why, I will have you know that there is a woman fair as you—almost as fair—who awaits me at this moment, solid as the earth, and through whose friendly hand the warm blood flows——"

He was interrupted by a heart-breaking cry. His companion had become little more than a trembling flake of vapor from which came a voice, vibrating with despair.

"Already! So soon!" she cried. "I knew, of course, that you had changed, but ah, I did not guess you had already found her, your mate of clay!"

"I didn't say she was, yet, my mate," he retorted; "and as for her being clayey, I must inform you that she has a very decided look of *you*."

"Ah, they all have *at first*, as you have yourself remarked," she sighed, then plucking up her bruised spirits a little, she murmured the lines of her little song:—

"I am the Woman Ideal, never on earth to be.  
These women of clay are the Real, but only  
shadows of me."

"I was not aware that that number had been encored," he cruelly remarked; adding, "Whatever she may or may not be, I assure you Euphemia would follow me to yonder town and share my toil."

His companion humbly hung her head, and as he contemplated her, all other women paled before her.

"How can a lesser creature hold me who have once loved your great loveliness?" he cried. "Come forth from the

"'COME BACK,' HE CRIED, 'AND SHOW ME THAT I HAVE NOT DESTROYED YOU.'"





shadow and let me swear fresh fealty to you. Be fully visible to me once more."

He waited, but she stood phantomlike, silently weeping. Then he stretched forth a faltering hand, but it penetrated her and came back empty.

"Speak," he demanded. "The time rapidly approaches when I must take my way to that distant city. Will you accompany me, as we planned of old, or do you utterly break faith with me?"

She lifted her grief-stricken eyes.

"Oh, don't you see why I cannot go? Don't you know who I am that walk so shadowy through the Dreams of Youth? I am the Woman That Is Not."

As she spoke, she faded perceptibly.

"If you ever felt for me one smallest part of the great love I cherished for you," he exclaimed, in desperation, "I charge you to appear before me as of old!"

She made a pitiful effort to solidify, but in vain. On the contrary, she seemed, despite herself, to subside still more into nothingness.

"Oh, I have broken you, quite, by my unbelief!" he cried. "Come back and show me that I have not destroyed you."

He fixed his eyes upon her as she made yet another lamentable effort, conscious of the ideal love that inspired her struggle, that love which he was to know no more.

At last, by a supreme throe, she seemed to attain what he had entreated. For one instant, he saw her vividly with hands outstretched and quivering, then she faded helplessly away and vanished from his sight.

The young fellow is no longer so young now, nor a dweller among those hills castled in the Spanish style, but an

industrious citizen of the distant town which had seemed so interesting through the binoculars of youth. He is on excellent terms with his wife, who thrives well on the air of the place, but it is possible he has not mentioned to her that sometimes when she fancies him snug in a prosaic after-dinner nap by the evening fireside, he is hasting along the lonely road beyond the city gates, blown upon by hill winds charged with scents from all the Gardens of Regret, until he stands under the impenetrable wall of La Jeunesse where ever and anon, across the glooming terraces, an airy figure walks with elfin feet, now wistfully gazing at the lights of the far-off town and now murmuring a little lonely song:—

"Among the Hills of Dreams I come and go,  
The Queen of all the shadows dwelling there,  
The Woman whom the young hearts, only, know  
And worship for a day and then forswear.  
I cannot follow to the vale below  
With loveliness too great for men to bear.  
Alas, alas, to be too bright, too fair!

"My deaths are many and I have no rest,  
My tale of sorrows long but ne'er complete.  
In vain I ope the heaven of my breast,  
In vain for each my mighty heart doth beat.  
Each finds, at last, the earth and deems it best.  
Loved and forgot, I go, with lonely feet.  
Alas, alas, to be too great, too sweet!"

There she stands above him as of old, quite still, for a moment, and with a long look of recognition—then fades once more, like mist.

In spite of all their fragrance, the hill winds blow a little chilly upon him as he hurries back to the city gates. "I never could tolerate that habit of disappearing every now and then, anyway," he reflects. "Euphemia never does it."





## WRECK OF THE BRIGANTINE "RINGER."

BY JOHN R. SPEARS.

I 'M not going to offer any explanations nor make any guesses about the cause of the trouble, for I'm none of your scientists—I'm just a plain dog sailor; but I'll tell just what happened, and all I know about it. After that if any one is not satisfied, he can go to the records of the New York Custom House, and the crew lists in the Shipping Office, where he'll find she cleared out just as I am going to tell, and that the last man to sign articles was Martin Gail. If that isn't proof enough, why, the timbers of the old hulk can be seen to this day, at low water, out there just where Mill Creek from Freeport, on Long Island, runs into Jones Inlet. The old stem stands up there even above high tide, and, although nobody that hasn't seen it is likely to believe me, every fisherman living thereabout has noticed that the end of it is crumbling slowly into the shape of a dog's head. Of course, people won't believe it. Why, only last summer Hal Pearson and I (Hal has an oyster-farm under the inlet there) took a weak-eyed young fellow with double-barreled glasses out to the beach there. He said he was a professor in some college, and so I told him the story and showed him the old stem to prove it, but he just smiled and said, in a lofty way:

"Oh, yes, my man, I see the ship was wrecked, and the timber does look something like a dog's head, but, you know, it's a mere coincidence."

The "Ringer" was about the finest brigantine that ever sailed coastwise out of New York. She belonged to old Jeremy Ringer up at Nyack. He built her there, and they say she paid for herself, and made good interest besides, inside of three years. By that time the owner had built another one bigger than the "Ringer," and the "Ringer's" old skipper, Capt. Allie Verplanck, got the new one, while Capt. Dan Sims, a lean, hook-nosed, smooth-faced, pig-eyed skipper from Connecticut, took the "Ringer." I never did see such an uncomfortable man as he was, even though it isn't right to talk so about anybody that's dead. You see, I'd been two voyages in her with Captain Verplanck, and

he was the nicest man that ever walked a quarterdeck.

Well, the "Ringer" was chartered to carry coal from New York to Matanzas. She loaded over at Communipaw, and hauled out to an anchor on the flat. Then Captain Sims went around to his favorite crimp in South Street for a crew, for he had nobody aboard only the mate, the steward and myself, and I shouldn't have been there only I had been kept by to help give the rigging a proper overhauling. But when he reached the crimp's, the first news he heard was that it was ebb tide for sailormen. Such times as that don't come very often, but there we were, with everything under hatches and the decks washed, but not until three days had passed did that crimp come alongside with a bumboat full of men and bags and bedding.

It was just about the time the streets were getting lighted up, when the boat brought to abreast the fore rigging, and I was standing there all alone keeping lookout while Mr. Snashall and the second mate were having a proper smoke in the cabin.

"Is the old man aboard?" said the crimp.

"No, he ain't," said I, "but the mates are and I'll call 'em."

"No, you won't," said he. "Hold fast a minute, or there'll be trouble."

"Trouble, is it?" said I. "And is it you that will be making it for me, then?" said I, wishing he'd try it, for there's no better fun than doing a crimp.

"No, damn you," he said. "You'll get one of your mates here into trouble and then all hands 'ill be atop of ye. Hold your tongue and lend a hand here."

With that, a lusty young fellow—the chap I spoke of as Martin Gail, it was—put a hand upon the rail and then came flying up as easy as if he were dancing a hornpipe. Turning around, he said to the crimp, "The dog first."

The crimp turned back a tarpaulin in the stern-sheets of the boat and there lay as fine a liver-and-white pup as ever you saw. The crimp grabbed it under the



fore legs and passed it up to Martin, who lifted it aboard and then turned to me.

"I saved him off a wreck while crossing the banks in the last ship," he said. "Pretty dog, ain't he? I think more of him than a brother, but when I asked your old man if I could bring him along he said he hadn't shipped any four-footed sailors and didn't mean to begin now. I'd signed on and couldn't back out, so I just stood in with the crimp and all hands here to smuggle him aboard and we'll keep him in the forecastle for luck, though the old man'll raise hell with us if he learns the beast is aboard, for I heard him tell the commissioners, after that little conversation I'd had about the dog, that dogs were his special horror, because he'd always expected to be bit by a mad dog and die of it when his time came."

The minute I saw how the course lay, as I don't need to tell anybody, I was right glad to lend a hand in making the pup feel he was to have home comforts on the "Ringer." Everybody that's had the advantages of a deep-water education knows that any dog brings luck to a ship when he's well treated. Why, the quickest sailing-passage ever made from Sandy Hook to Liverpool was that of the "Dread-naught," and just as she was hauling out from Pier 10, down in South Street, her skipper lassoed a liver-and-white bird-dog out of the slip with a heaving line. However that dog got overboard nobody knew, but there's the facts, as every old ship-merchant in New York knows.

So we stowed the dog away comfortable in a forward bunk, and then I notified the mates that the crew was alongside. An hour later Captain Sims came aboard, and then, as wind and tide served, we made sail, got the anchor and away we went. That was on the night of August 23, 1874, and as I said, any one can find by the records that the "Ringer" was cleared at the Custom House four days before that, and that was the day the crew signed articles before the shipping commissioner. For ten days thereafter we had nothing to complain of especially.

But on the tenth day the trouble began. We'd had our supper—all the cornbread and molasses we could eat. Old Capt. Jeremy Ringer was great on feeding sailors

with cornbread and molasses. And of course we were all feeling pretty good, as we worked about the decks putting things to rights. Martin Gail was at the wheel, holding her within a hair of the course. Captain Sims was walking to and fro in the waist, while Mr. Snashall sat on the taffrail smoking his pipe, when all unexpectedly up comes the liver-and-white pup out of the forecastle, barking at the top of his voice, the moment he sniffed the fresh air, and then away aft he galloped with ears flapping and mouth open—the happiest pup anybody ever saw.

But the way the sight of it worked the old man was something I never saw before or since. The moment he saw the dog, he stopped in his tracks and stared with his little pig-eyes bulging, and then away he went to the weather main-rigging and there he climbed to the third ratline, while the dog went galloping aft to where Martin stood at the wheel. Martin was looking very red in the face, not saying a word.

"Mr. Snashall!" bawled the captain.

"Sir," said the mate, getting on his feet.

"Heave that damned dog overboard. It belongs to the man at the wheel, and if he bats his eye while you're doing of it, knock him down."

"Aye, aye, sir," said the mate, and then without further ado knocked Martin halfway to the low lee rail, where he lay quivering for a moment while the dog came and licked his face.

Mr. Snashall held the wheel steady until Martin got up and came back to take it. The dog naturally followed its master, but it stopped short when it saw Snashall leave the wheel, and started to slink away forward. At that, the mate, with a run, overtook it, and giving it a swinging kick, lifted it over the rail to drop splashing into the sea.

It was a lovely tropical evening. The sweet little breeze was washing the "Ringer" along so slowly that for a time the swimming dog, with its head thrown well forward, seemed to keep pace with the vessel. But in a minute or two it was visibly losing ground, and then as it dropped well astern it began to whine and cry.

The men gathered at the rail and looked in perfect silence at the struggling beast,



while even the captain stood motionless in his place gazing at it. Martin's face was now as white as a lady's handkerchief, save only for a red blotch around one eye, and every moment or two he wiped his lips with the back of his hand, though I could see that they were as dry as a cabin bulkhead.

Finally Martin turned his head for a look at the dog, and as he did so he shuffled his feet on the deck and turned back to his work with a jerk. At that the captain began climbing down out of the rigging, and we naturally glanced to see what he was going to do, but he stopped on the sheer-pole and when we looked away astern again we saw the fin of a shark that was heading straight for the dog.

It was the sight of the fin that had made Martin turn so quickly from looking at the dog, and Captain Sims had stopped on the sheer-pole to see the end of the tragedy. In some way that dog realized the approach of the new danger, for he now began to howl in terror, while he splashed the water in a vain effort to swim faster. Then the black fin sank out of sight, the dog's shoulders were lifted half out of water, it opened wide its mouth, and while shaking its head from side to side was drawn down out of sight.

The death of the dog made another man of Martin Gail. He had been the most jovial lad in the forecastle—the kind of shipmate you'll rarely see. Why, his chest was a regular apothecary-shop with medicines, and he was always ready with anything he had if one of us was sick or even so much as skinned a finger. But now he never said a word unless obliged to, and he never opened his medicines, either, so far as I saw. Such times as he wasn't asleep during his watch below, he passed reading some books that told all about making poisons, and how to turn lead into silver, and what kind of dreams would come true, and how to make the spirits of the dead come back so they could be seen. It was enough for me to look at the titles of such books as that, but he seemed to just dote on them.

However, we didn't have any trouble immediately after the dog was killed, even though everybody in the forecastle was looking for it, but the old man and

Mr. Snashall had a grudge laid up against Martin, and the way he was kept on the jump when on deck was by no means slow, and we were wondering whether there was, after all, any such thing as spoiling the "Ringer's" luck, when a morning came that lifted the big mountain they call the Pan of Matanzas out of the sea, and by eleven o'clock we were reaching into the port with all sail set and the trade-winds just making the white water roar away from her bows. Martin Gail was standing at the wheel, and being in the same watch I could see that he was looking about right sharp, as if he meant to leave the ship, and was thinking what he would do afterwards, when the captain ordered the wheel down, because we were shaving Punta Gorda a wee bit closely. Martin began clawing the spokes, of course, and soon had the wheel down, but as the captain said "Steady," the tiller-rope broke, and the next minute the "Ringer" was up in the wind, and away she drifted toward the shoals and the mercies of Spanish wreckers.

By quick work, we got the anchor down and brought her up just in time, but the strain on the spars, as the anchor took bottom, carried away the topgallant mast and jibboom, so we had a pretty mess of it for the rest of that day and for some days after, though it mightily relieved my mind when it all happened, for I couldn't but think such doings as we had seen must spoil any ship's luck.

And that was only the beginning. It seemed as if the running-gear was all going rotten from that time on. Now that I recall it all, I remember that the halliards and topping lifts and ropes of that kind were generally all right, but the braces fell apart when we got new spars on end, and hawsers broke, and, not to spin the yarn too long, it seemed as if the devil was doing his best to drive us ashore during all the weeks we lay there in the harbor discharging coal and taking on sugar.

It was on October 17th that we made sail for home. I was looking for trouble off Punta Gorda, but we weathered it without accident and we soon headed away for the Florida coast and the Gulf Stream with a trade-wind over the starboard quarter



that was something to cheer. But what with the accidents we'd had, and the prospects of narrow waters and coral reefs ahead, I began to feel as if I should be glad when I saw old New York once more. For not only did I seem to feel the "Ringer's" keel strike the shoals as I steered her around Punta Gorda, but a couple of minutes or so later I was all in a shiver over that old tiller-rope that by breaking had come so near to stranding us when we entered the harbor.

In the hurry of getting her under way to her berth again after that accident, we cast off the broken parts of the old tiller-rope and dropped them into a chest that was kept alongside the water-butt just forward of the cabin, and then a new one was rove off. But now Mr. Taylor, the second mate, got the two parts and brought them to the lee side of the quarterdeck, on the captain's order to put in a long splice and put the rope by for use in case of need. Captain Sims was a tidy hand himself in all kinds of marlinespike work, and he stood by, now, with his hands in his pockets, to watch Mr. Taylor's work.

Taking a seat on the mainsheet cleat, Mr. Taylor brought the broken ends together on his lap, took hold of the strands of one of the ends, and then dropped both parts together on deck and jumped up.

"What ails ye?" said the captain, and that was just what I was wanting to know, too, but for a minute Mr. Taylor worked his jaws without a word, and then blurted out:

"Have a look at them ends yourself, sir," he said, putting the toe of one boot on them. "Do you see how they crumble? And will you have a look at the color, sir? It's just as if they'd—they'd been slobbered on, sir. I wouldn't say a word, sir, but I can't help seeing what I see, and them two ends is just like the ends of all the other gear that's carried away in this bloody port. I've been seeing of it all, and, not knowing what to make of it till this minute when the feel of them ends made me remember——"

He stopped short, with his head down.

"What are you stopping for?" said Captain Sims. "Reel it all off while you're about it."

"I will, sir," said the officer. "Them

ends is just like the ends of a rope I tied a dog with at home after he'd chewed the thing in two, only they're brittle and they smell like brimstone."

He looked half defiantly at the captain, who drew his lean face into a grin.

"Well?" said the captain.

"Well, sir, if you want me to say it, I can only tell you I don't understand it at all, sir, but it's just as if those ends had been chewed off, and the rest of the gear was just the same, and I'll be glad when I see New York again—if we ever do get there, which I'm doubting."

"Um!" said the captain. "Now you've relieved your mind, you ought to feel better. So just cut away the rotten part and go on with your splicing. You may be fool enough to believe that the devil and that pup we kicked overboard have come back with invisible teeth and brimstone slobber to chaw off our ropes, but I don't, and I don't mean to hear another word about it from you or anybody else aboard ship. You'll find it cold enough when you reach Sandy Hook to make you wish you had some of the devil's fuel to keep you warm."

It was all plain enough to me from that time on, and so it was to everybody forward. The murder of the dog had brought bad luck in a way we hadn't dreamed of, and not a man of us dared talk about it by night, and only now and then did we mention it during the day watches. The wind favored us, and all the gear held fast, but that only scared us the more, for we knew that we were being led on in that way to quiet us before the final disaster came. And we were right, too.

I say the wind favored us for about ten days, and we had an excellent run, until we were above the latitude of the Chesapeake, when the weather became unsettled, and finally when we supposed we were somewhere off Squan Beach the barometer began to dance. At that all hands were turned out to make her snug. We left a close-reefed mainsail, a lower fore-topsail and the fore-staysail only upon her, and she seemed as if she were fit to ride out anything. And so she would have been, too, but for her luck being gone.

I remember very well that it was the afternoon of October 29th that we reefed



her down. We had scarcely done our work when the wind fell away almost to a dead calm. Captain Sims was looking for a northeast gale, and braced everything sharp up on the starboard tack, because she was lying head to north'ard, even though the air was so light that she scarcely had steerageway on. The sky grew thick, rather than cloudy, as the afternoon wore away. The sun faded and the sky and horizon kept closing in on us nearer and nearer.

The watch on deck loitered beside the galley, saying never a word, save only Martin Gail, who was now more restless than he had ever been aboard the "Ringer."

Even the frequent orders he got from the quarterdeck (for the hazing had been uninterrupted since the dog was thrown overboard) did not now seem to worry him. In fact, he grew cheerful under it, and finally began to whistle "Old Zip Coon" through his teeth.

That whistling just about drove me wild, and I went to him and said:

"For God's sake, Mart, let up on the whistle. Haven't we got enough bad luck in store without your begging the devil to give us more?"

"Oh, that's all right, Jack," said he. "It'll bring us wind and wind is what we want now, ain't it?"

Well, now, it was just as if his words had done it, for he had hardly stopped speaking when the sky seemed to break all up into such masses of snow as I never saw before or since, and then with swish and splash the wind came out the west like a powder blast.

Captain Sims, who was on the quarterdeck, heard it coming before it arrived and bawling for all hands to brace around the fore yards, he shifted over the mainsheet himself, and while the boom was yet hanging to port, jumped on the starboard rail just abaft the main rigging to see that we worked on the jump.

A minute later, and just as we started hauling on the braces, the wind struck us.

Down we rolled with the topsail thundering in the wind and the fore-staysail aback. The mainsail swung across the deck to fetch up on the sheets with a tremendous jerk, and then it did seem as if

everything aloft as well as about deck was going to pieces. The mainsheet parted and the boom, swinging on, knocked Captain Sims into the sea, where he disappeared instantly. The peak and throat halliards of the sail both parted the next minute. The braces that we were to haul on broke the minute we brought any strain on them. The lower fore-topsail was split. And in the midst of the uproar I heard such yelps and howls as only the devil was equal to.

And worse was coming. While we were that paralyzed we couldn't stir a hand or foot, we found white water all around us, and then the sea hove us up on the beach, just east of Jones Inlet. The next sea swept the deck, carrying Martin Gail and another man overboard. Luckily for the rest of us, another sea hove us up to where the hulk rested easy enough to let us save our lives.

Next day, when the shore folks came and took us off, they found Martin Gail's body on the beach about a mile from the wreck. Of course, there was an inquest over it, and when old Doc Silverton called on me to testify I started telling the whole story just as I've told it here. He let me go on till I got as far as where Mr. Taylor was explaining to Captain Sims how that dog had come back to bring trouble to the ship, and then he stopped me. He said that kind of a yarn might go among "fool sailors," but it wasn't the proper thing for a court of record, because anybody could see that Martin Gail had done it all.

So I was obliged to tell nothing only just what I saw happen, and when all the testimony was in, and Silverton had had his say, the jury put their heads together for about two minutes and then announced that the said Martin Gail, deceased, came to his death by suicide!

As I said, I'm not going to offer any explanations nor make any guesses, because I'm none of your scientists, but just a plain dog sailor. Moreover, I wouldn't be so disrespectful to the coroner or the jury as to say that if they'd had a deep-water education they'd ha' known more, but if anybody will tell me how Martin Gail could have done it all I'll say, "Thank ye hearty, mate," and mean it, too.





A MOTHER knelt on the tessellated floor of the Temple of Fate, praying earnestly for boons for her unborn infant. The pavement was rich with colored marbles and precious stones, the grateful gifts of generations of votaries. Before her in a niche stood the shrine of the goddess—inscrutable, ineffable, an unending mystery.

Of a sudden, as she knelt there, an opalescent cloud seemed to fill the sculptured niche as with a halo of glory. It was oval in shape, and intangible in substance; but it opened slowly, dispersing itself in pale-blue smoke, and disclosed to view, sphinx-like, the visible form of the goddess.

"What would you have of me?" she asked, in strangely familiar tones, yet echoing from the past, the present and the future.

The mother looked up, overjoyed though terrified. "I ask gifts," she cried, "for my unborn babe, whom I bring on my bended knees as thy votary."

The goddess leaned forward in her blandest mood. To one in ten thousand she assumes that demeanor. For caprice is to her the very breath of life; she makes one happy, and myriads miserable.

"Take what you will," she answered, smiling. "Your prayer has moved me. But take my advice as well, and be guided by me in the blessings you crave for him."

"What better could I ask, O Fate?" the mother answered, all tremulous. "I put him in your hands. Do what you think is best for him."

The goddess looked down upon her with quite human affability. How affable she can be in her moments of good humor!

"Well, then," she began, "I suppose, first of all, you wish him to be successful."

The mother's voice trembled a little. She had a true woman's sense that duty should come first and success only afterward—not knowing that these two are forever sundered. "I would wish him to be good," she said, "O Fate, if it is all the same to you."

The goddess stroked her own face. "Yes, he may be good enough," she replied, in a dubitative accent. "That is to say, about as good as the average of his countrymen. Of course, I would advise you not to let him be criminal: he should avoid open theft, deeds of violence, perhaps mere swindling. On the whole, I wouldn't even let him go into bubble companies. But he mustn't be *too* good—morally earnest, I mean—in advance of his time—in one word, quixotic. I take it for granted what you aim at is to make him happy. Now, his happiness, I assure you, will be best subserved by keeping him in the center, as it were, removed from all extremes: neither too good nor too bad; neither virtuous nor vicious. He should just attain the average moral level of his well-to-do contemporaries. Men who fall below that standard are apt to get into trouble: imprisonment for fraud, or at least exposure and expatriation, await them. Men who rise much above it have a far harder time: they are persecuted and misunderstood, and are martyrs to conscience. Here in my wallet I have plenty of good, safe, conventional moral characters to bestow. Be guided by me; accept one of these for your beloved child; and be convinced of this truth: *medio tutissimus ibit*."



The mother bowed her head. "As you will," she said meekly. "You, Fate, know best. Who am I that I should oppose you?"

"That's well," the goddess replied, quite pleased at her acquiescence; for mortals as a rule are so *very* unreasonable. "I see at a glance you're a practical woman. And now, as to intellect? You'd like him, I take it, to be moderately clever."

"I should like him," the mother answered, "to be wise and able, a lover of lovely things, beautiful-souled and poetical."

The goddess frowned. "You mean well," she answered; "but I see you don't know how to adapt your means to the end you have in view for him. You wish him to be happy. Now, if you'll listen to me, you won't ask any such useless gifts as those for his happiness. What is wanted for success is a good, sound, able, mediocre intelligence. He should see just far enough ahead to know what is coming in the immediate future. He should have excellent practical parts; be fitted to take events at the turn of the tide; know how to use them to his own advantage. He should be adapted to his environment. Poetical ideas and beautiful aspirations would only be in the way for him; they are mere will-o'-the-wisps which divert a man from the serious pursuit of success and happiness. Deep insight and a wide outlook are almost equally dangerous. They lead men astray from the lodestar of self into the devious by-ways of philanthropy, speculation, the good of posterity, the general advantage. Short views are best; narrow horizons safest. I have always fancied those men get on most in the world who have fair average intellects, great energy and determination, no marked philosophic or poetical bent, and a steady resolution to succeed before everything. Very high intelligence, like a very noble moral character, leads only, as a rule, to failure and misery. Commonplace pays. If you wish me to give a disposition of that sort to your unborn child, you may rest perfectly satisfied I shall have done just the happiest I can for his future."

The mother's face quivered. A tear hung glistening on her long dark lashes.

"That was hardly the dream I had cherished for him," she murmured, with some natural human regret. "It is sad to resign it. But since it is for his happiness, O Fate, work your will with him."

The goddess bent down, still more gracious than ever. "That's right," she answered. "I seldom have met so sensible a mother. Put your case in my hands, and I'll do everything for your boy. I'll give him sound health, an excellent digestion, moderate good looks—too much is apt to turn a man into a puppy—a medium intelligence, firm logical grasp of all middle principles, respectability, conventional morality, and no fads of any sort. I will make him, all round, a strong, able, vigorous, strenuous, unimaginative, unemotional, ordinary man. In the struggle for existence, he will rise of himself to the top like a cork in water. Of course, I will give him just enough taste in literature and art to enable him to enjoy himself; but he shall never be troubled with yearnings and aspirations, ideals in life, or passionate sympathy for suffering humanity. Subscriptions to charities will suffice his soul; he will prefer Gilbert and Sullivan to Ibsen or Wagner. In short, he will thoroughly understand and make the best of the present, while he will be troubled with no foolish qualms about the future."

"And what would you do about the choice of a walk in life for him?" the mother asked dubiously.

"Oh, as to that," Fate replied, "it's absolutely indifferent. With the qualities I have bestowed upon him, he is sure to succeed, whatever you do with him. If he goes into the army, he'll rise to be Field-Marshal and be given a peerage; if he prefers the bar, he'll sit upon the wool-sack; if he chooses the church, he'll die an Archbishop. Literature and art I do not recommend; but even there, he would be sure of a popular triumph. However, you can safely leave all that to himself. Priest or soldier, he will know on which side his bread is buttered."

And the mother rose from her knees with tears trickling down her cheek. For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul—his own higher nature?





# A New Christmas Carol

By W. Pett Ridge

I

F Mr. Broadbent had not

"If it came twice, madam," declared

been a self-satisfied man, a successful man, a man of importance in Fen Court and in the City, I should have had to think of some one else to write about. Because Mr. Broadbent was a man of supreme self-content, he had accepted the assurance of a deputation of three titled ladies that the Christmas bazaar would be an absolute failure unless dear Mr.

Mr. Broadbent strenuously, "it would be abolished."

Broadbent could see his way to give his patronage and five guineas.

Also, but for the fact that Mr. Broadbent was a successful man, he could not, of course, have afforded this expenditure; and but for the fact that he was one determined to get his money's worth, he would have torn up the ticket to the bazaar.

He entered the hall with a frown that he declined to unpin from his face when one of the lady patronesses at the barrier bade him welcome. Within, the great circular space was filled with a representation of what the program declared to be an Alsatian village, with imitation fir-trees and painted pines; for a background snow-topped hills, a papier-mâché ruined castle, and a real waterfall that worked at intervals. For the rest, there were stalls loaded with everything that Mr. Broadbent did not want, never had wanted and never would want, and smart, very tall young women went about wearing a head-dress that made them look like windmills.

"A parrot!" said one, insinuatingly. "The Duchess is *so* anxious that we should get rid of it. Remember Christmas comes only once a year."

There were side-shows with new inventions, where for the first time (he was not a man who wasted money on public entertainments) Mr. Broadbent with astonishment saw moving pictures of quite recent events, heard a grim instrument with a mouth of brass give in a reedy, ghost-like way a song that his young sister used to sing in—well, goodness knew how long ago. For a moment he wondered whether his sister sang it now, but she had married in direct opposition to his emphatic advice and that had made a good excuse for losing sight of her. Just as well; she had children who would probably borrow money from him. They would have to make their own way in the world as he had made his. As Mr. Broadbent often said on being congratulated, "My dear sir, a man is what he intended himself to be." There had been ups and downs in his career, but he honestly felt that he had nobody to thank but himself for his success.

Mr. Broadbent was near a curtained entrance to one of the rooms at the side when a large-faced man in a fur-lined coat brushed past him and went in. Mr. Broadbent, ever ready to complain on the least possible excuse, followed the large-faced man to demand apology, and found himself immediately inside a room with chairs sparsely occupied by people who did their duty by saying warningly to Mr. Broadbent, "S-s-s-s-sh!"

He dropped into the nearest seat, two rows behind the large-faced man whose



unintentional act was being exaggerated into the importance of a serious assault.

"'A Christmas Carol,'" said a voice, suddenly and loudly, on the platform.

The audience took the information with calm.

"'Marley was dead to begin with! There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of the burial was signed by the clergyman——'"

Mr. Broadbent sat back in his stall and sneered at the electric light in the center of the ceiling. He knew it well, this long description of a man's nature being altered, his whole attitude toward the world changed, by a mere dream. There had been a time in his early youth—he remembered the green-covered monthly numbers in his father's shop in Eversholt Street—when he had been greatly impressed by this particular story, but he had grown older and wiser now. Not bad, perhaps, as a piece of imaginative fiction, but really——

"'These things don't happen,'" said Mr. Broadbent knowingly. "You mustn't tell me! A man can't change at that age. He has fixed and settled himself by that time. Take my own case for instance."

The room had a warmer temperature than the hall outside, and the hall outside had the advantage over the bitter day beyond. This, with the repeated shakes of the head denoting incredulity, might have made Mr. Broadbent drowsy. It is quite likely that he would have fallen asleep, only that at the very right moment the large-faced man two rows before him looked round to hide a yawn and, catching sight of him, beckoned to him.

"Sir," he said in a nasal accent, "I owe you an apology." They walked out.

"You do."

"I take it, sir—you will contradict me if I am wrong, and from your general manner you may contradict me if I am right—I take it that here, as in my country, everything is possible to a man of determination. At the same time, it must be remembered that everybody owes a great deal to what one may term accident, or environment, or the working of providence."

"Those things," remarked Mr. Broadbent, "as a matter of fact, don't matter a snap."

"I want to try something like a confidence trick on you," said the other, after a pause. "I want you to come and see an invention of mine. It is just here."

"Anything to pay?"

"Not a cent."

The large-faced man drew back some heavy green curtains and they went into a recess. The place was dark; a machine stood against the wall, with a small bright light at the back.

"Take off your hat." Mr. Broadbent obeyed, for a tone of command had come into the man's voice. "Put your wrists in here." He did this. "Now look into this aperture." Mr. Broadbent complied. "See anything?"

"Nothing," said Mr. Broadbent.

"Give me a date—an important date—in your life," said the inventor in a steady, dictatorial voice, "and you will then see what, but for some mere accident, would have occurred. This is, perhaps, the most wonderful and the most complete apparatus that human ingenuity——"

"I must be going," said Mr. Broadbent uneasily. "Just turn a handle or something, will you, and release my wrists."

"You don't leave until I have persuaded you of the excellence of this remarkable invention," said the other. "Give me a date."

Mr. Broadbent, looking in at the white, blank, lighted space, thought for a few moments.

"December," he said, sulkily. "December in 1868."

"Click!" exclaimed the machine.

## II.

It was late in the afternoon of a December day and the boys were on a snowy platform of the small railway-station; there in good time, with painted deal boxes stacked up; all the available staff, including the night signalman, going about distractedly with London labels; Christmas holidays had begun and all the pupils of Mansford House were bound for home. The boys went up and down screaming in the manner of contentious rooks, and young Broadbent screamed with the rest of them. Assistant masters in tweed caps and overcoats became infected by the good temper of the situation and punched the boys.



cheerfully wishing them a happy Christmas. When a boy called for "Three cheers for old Marney Marnes," the master who taught German, and sound, light and heat and many other subjects, flushed with as much pleasure as though a perfectly decorous and respectful compliment had been paid to him.

The boy Broadbent appeared to remember something. He went to the door of the little booking-office which was marked "Private," and knocked.

"Come in," cried the office-boy.

"Can you lend me a pen and a dip of ink for a moment?" said young Broadbent.

"Is it absolutely necessary?"

"Yes," said young Broadbent.

"Then," replied the office-boy, unable to conceal his satisfaction, "then you can't have it."

"I'll pay you twopence."

"What's twopence to me?" demanded the office-boy in a lordly way.

"I've a jolly good mind to punch your nose for you," said young Broadbent fiercely.

"Take a man to do that," retorted the office-boy.

"Ever read 'Jack Harkaway's School-days'?" with a return to conciliation.

"No," said the office-boy, "nor yet wanted to."

"I'll lend it to you next term if you give me a dip of ink now."

The machine said "Click!" in its loud, significant way. When the scene had trembled and changed, young Broadbent was blotting his report carefully and thanking the office-boy.

"But this didn't happen," protested Mr. Broadbent to the inventor urgently. "I remember quite well that as a matter of fact the office-boy refused."

"You will probably see now," replied the voice of the large-faced man at his side in satisfied tones, "exactly what would have occurred if you had obtained pen and ink."

"I can't be responsible for what might have happened," he remarked sulkily.

"Quite so, quite so; you were not entirely responsible, sir, for what *did* happen."

Here they were at the new Charing

Cross station, and here at the barrier stood his own dear mother and his young sister, and the boy, forgetting all the reticence of behavior toward womenfolk that school-boy etiquette prescribed, rushed toward them and allowed himself to be hugged by them.

A straw-floored omnibus took them from St. Martin's Church up through Seven Dials and St. Giles' and Tottenham Court Road.

"Got a good report, dear?" asked his mother, when he had slung himself down in a manly way at the Cobden statue with the aid of the driver's strap.

"Not bad," said the boy, flushing.

"Father'll approve of you, Johnnie," said his mother brightly, "when he sees your report."

His father, as they went through the shop, was discussing chapel matters violently with a customer, and only nodded to them and continued the conversation. His father was a bearded man with a clean-shaven upper lip; every wiry hair of his beard seemed to bristle with determination and a fixed, definite opinion. The boy felt chilled as he saw him, but in a brief space was seated upstairs at a round table with a solid chunk of potato-pie before him.

Quite late in the meal he made a casual reference to his prize, and his young sister took the key of his box and flew to obtain it. The two were lost in admiration of the complimentary notice on the fly-leaf when his father tramped slowly upstairs.

"Well, papa," said the boy awkwardly.

"Give father a kiss," suggested his mother.

"And how," said his father, rubbing his cheek with a red handkerchief after the filial salute—"how have you been getting on, my lad, with your studies?"

"Splendid," replied his mother exultantly. "He's brought home this prize and his report. Where's your report, Johnnie?"

The boy produced the long sealed envelope and handed it rather nervously across the table to his father.

"You don't know what's in this, I suppose, my lad?"

"No, papa."

"Ah!" said his father, and combed out his wiry beard with his fingers.



"You'll have a cup of tea, father?"

"Don't feel like tea, mother."

"Half a cup?" The boy's father gave a negative shake of the head. "Now you're proud of our John, aren't you, father? Now we shall all spend a happy Christmas, shan't we?"

The boy was feeling quite a glow of pride and self-righteousness by this time.

"I want to say one or two words to you, my lad," said his father from the hearth-rug. "I want to know what you thought of being when you left school?"

"I'm sure he'll be a credit to us, whatever he goes in for," said the mother respectfully.

"Leave my hair alone," ordered the boy, wriggling. "Second time I've had to speak about it."

"There have been times when I haven't felt quite satisfied with you, and I've had to punish you, but I can assure you that it's hurt me more'n it has you." The boy restrained the obvious retort, for he was becoming impressed by his father's manner. "'A wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish son,' we are told, 'is the heaviness of his mother.'"

The mother murmured the succeeding text reverently.

"Now, I mean to do my duty by you, whatever it costs me to do it." He spoke more rapidly and waved his arm. "I want you to understand why I do it, because it may to some appear perhaps harsh"—here he glanced at his wife—"but I do it because it's my duty as father unto son. In the first place, you're not going back to that school."

"Skin-a-ma-link-de-doodel-ah," cried the boy cheerfully, slipping from his mother's lap to give a few steps of a Christy Minstrel dance.

"Enough of that," said his father sharply. "Go back to where you were sitting. That's what you pick up at your so-called boarding-school."

"It's only the boy's manner," pleaded his mother with gentleness. "We were all light-hearted once."

"Once is plenty. Now listen to me, my lad, as you've never listened in your life before." The boy's father had to wait whilst a clock on the mantelpiece laboriously said "Cuckoo" nine times. "You've

brought home this evening a very good report. That is so, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Say 'Yes, papa,'" prompted his mother.

"Yes, papa."

"Written by your head-master?"

"Yes, papa."

"Written by him exactly as you handed it to me?"

"Ye-yes, papa."

"Quite sure of that?"

"Quite sure, papa."

The man on the hearth-rug gave a sigh which he checked half-way. "And him," he said, for a moment turning toward the mirror, "the only boy!"

He resumed: "I suppose it never occurred to you, my lad, clever as you are and handy with the pen as you may be, that your head-master would send on a copy of this report by post? A copy that would reach me direct; a copy that you wouldn't have any chance of——"

"William!" cried the mother alarmedly, hugging the white-faced boy. "Think of what you're saying."

"I've thought it all out, mother. I've been a-wrestling with it all I could, and I've been asking over and over for 'elp, but—I've had to make up my mind all by myself."

"You might have talked it over with me, dear."

"No," he said, looking down at her as the boy hid his face ashamedly in her arm. "Even you couldn't have given me any assistance."

"Besides," she urged, "perhaps it was one of the other boys put him up to it."

The boy muttered something that only his mother could hear.

"He says," reported his mother apologetically, "that it was all his own idea."

"And the book prize?"

"I bought that," said the boy sullenly.

"I think," said his father slowly, as he looked at the trembling back of his son, "I think I begin to see my way clear. I've done all I can, and now I'm going to let the world have a try."

"I'd looked forward," he went on, "to your growing up, and I'd got an idea of making a minister of you and—going one Sunday morning to hear my own boy preach a sermon."



"William!"

"That's a circumstance that won't happen now. What *will* happen I don't know, and there's only One above that does know and He don't tell us much about the far-off future. But what's going to happen to-morrow morning at nine o'clock is this. You'll pack up a few things for him, mother, in a carpet-bag. I shall give him five shillings——"

The boy's eyes glistened with approval.

"And I turn him out of this 'ouse and he's not to come back until I send for him."

"Not to come back, William?" cried the mother.

"It's hard on you, old sweet." The two children had never before heard him use this appellation; it was a reminiscence of courting-days. "But it's got to be."

"What," said the boy in frightened tones, "what am I to do?"

"What are you to do?" With a sudden burst of exasperation, "Why, you've got to make your own way in the world without a friend or a relative to help you. You've got to go up or go down, to go to the good or go to the bad, by yourself. If there's the making of a man in you, it'll come out perhaps; if there's the making of a forger——"

"William. William! The children!"

"——why, the sooner you come to a bad end the better, there!" he ended, taking his wife's handkerchief and wiping his hot and excited face. "I've said what I wanted to and it's all finished, so far as I'm concerned. I shan't see you to-morrow morning and I hope I shall never see you again."

"William! you'll change your mind."

"Have you ever known me to?"

"But—you'll be sorry for this, dear, some day."

"If I am," he said, walking in a straight line to the door and turning there to have a last look at his son—"if I am, no one shall ever know it."

A wild rain of tears from the little girl slightly relieved the tension. She rocked with anguish, her back trembled, the tartan bow at the end of her rope of back hair fluttered tremulously, and her mother, fearing a hysterical attack, had to leave the white-faced, shivering boy and go to her daughter.

When the boy's mother, having finally decided that the little girl should go straight to bed, dispatched her to her room with strong injunctions not to forget to say her prayers and to ask to be made a better girl—when his mother, having done this, turned her regretful face toward him, then he felt that he could bear no more reproaches and crept upstairs to his room, undressed in the dark and went to bed. He was listening to the clatter of the loose window, when the door opened and his mother came quietly into the room. She called him by his name, but he sulkily refrained from replying, and as she passed her hand over his forehead he closed his eyes. His mother nestled her face down close to his on the pillow. He heard her speak in a choked whisper:

"Bless and keep him, and please, *please* make him a better boy."

"Capital invention," said Mr. Broadbent distressedly. "I'll go now, if you don't mind."

"Stay right there," replied the voice of the inventor. "You get three opportunities, sir, of seeing what might have been."

"One's ample," said Mr. Broadbent.

"What," asked the inventor, "is the next date that you wish your attention fixed upon?"

"Let's go on ten years, then," said Mr. Broadbent reluctantly.

"December, 1878."

### III.

The picture showed a tall youth with a bony face and what appeared to be side-whiskers. Mr. Broadbent's mind went back to the period. He remembered that he was at this age getting his half-crown increase every year, never imperiling it as some did by late arrival in the morning, always signing on before the red line was drawn in the book. He was absolutely reliable as a quoter of rates and could give an estimate for the conveyance of pianofortes to Calicut that always left an agreeable profit for the firm, and he had forty-six pounds ten shillings ninepence in the Post-Office Savings Bank. Mr. Broadbent felt young again as he saw in the picture conveyances stopping at the town hall and young ladies in tweed caps



with belaced skirts uplifted darting across the slush-covered pavement into the warmth and light of the vestibule, their attendant knights following with small brown-paper parcels containing the ladies' slippers. The proportion of ladies to gentlemen was three to one, and young Broadbent felt the glow of conceit in observing that dozens of female heads turned expectantly in his direction.

"How do?" he said languidly to one of the secretaries, who was wearing something that looked like the Grand Cross of the Star of India and was in the center of the long-room preparing to act as master of ceremonies.

"Ah!" remarked the M. C. sportively, "there you are then. How are *you*? Going out much this Christmas? Many invites?"

"Don't speak of it," replied young Broadbent, with a fine imitation of a shudder. "Worried to death with 'em."

He strolled round the hall humming in a refined way and inspecting the ladies on the rout seats.

Presently he found an elegant young person with hair of ambiguous color, who as she caught his glance concealed a yawn behind a fan that had cupids painted upon it. This young woman had attractions that gave pleasure to the eye, and the fact that she had endeavored in her dress to omit none of the colors of the rainbow seemed to give her, in the youthful view of Broadbent, an air of distinction. A pink-satin cape with white fur at the edges slipped from the seat beside her.

"Oh, thanks very much," she said, as he gallantly restored it.

"Don't mention it," he said, blushing.

"It isn't really mine," said the young person; "it's my sister's."

"You're not alone then?"

"Should think not indeed."

"Got a dance to spare?"

She looked at him with an air of pained surprise.

"I'm afraid you're not used to going out into society," she remarked distantly. "Fancy asking me for a dance before we've been introduced." She coughed and added, "There's one of the stewards over there."

On this hint he acted, and the steward, pulled from a crowd of brothers who were

urging that he find partners for their sisters, came over with him and, having ascertained in a whisper the names of each, made the formal introduction.

"That's better," said Miss Elkin contentedly. "Now then, what about this first set of quadrilles?"

"Long time since I danced the quadrilles," he said.

"I'll see you through them," said Miss Elkin. "Let's take sides."

She proved an excellent companion for an undecided dancer, and when Broadbent's step went in the wrong direction she clutched at him and directed him masterfully.

"What are you?" she demanded when this episode was over. "What do you do for a living?"

Broadbent furnished the information truthfully, but gave a rosy view of his prospects in Fen Court which at the time was scarcely excusable.

"And not married? What an extraordinary circumstance!" cried Miss Elkin. "Haven't you ever been in love?"

"Not until now," he said with a burst.

"Don't be so silly," she said reprovingly, but not displeased. "I expect you say that to every girl you meet."

This was at twenty-five minutes past ten. At a quarter to eleven (such is the influence of some woman on some man) John W. Broadbent, in the far corner of the hall, goaded by the impression that a new partner was making on Miss Elkin, had made her a proposal of marriage.

"Well," he said (and Mr. Broadbent, looking into the instrument, strained his eyes and his ears as this distant episode came before him), "what's your answer?"

"Click!" remarked the instrument. A white space, amid a dead silence, fluttered for a second; then the picture and the sound of voices came again. Mr. Broadbent knew that this was one of the junctions between what was and what might have been.

"It's a bit sudden," remarked Miss Elkin, looking at him with a new interest. "I don't seem to have known you more than a few hours. But, as a matter of fact, I don't get on very well with my



people at home and—— Mind you, I'm accustomed to having everything my own way."

"Your way will be my way."

"And don't you go to thinking that I'm perfect, because I ain't."

"You're as near to perfection," said young Broadbent fervently, "as it's possible to get."

"Very well then," agreed Miss Elkin in a businesslike way. "We can give it a trial. I'll just go across and tell my sister. It'll make her so mad!"

Mr. Broadbent at the machine shook his head and envied the happiness that had never been his.

"Anything gone wrong with it?" asked the inventor at his side, anxiously. The instrument gave a sound of whirring. "Maybe it's going to skip a year or so."

Rather an untidy room it looked at first sight. A small servant opened the street door with her key, and took the baby out of its cot. Presently a whiskered man of twenty-four with a look of care on his face entered the room.

"Evening, sir."

"Where's your mistress, Martha?"

"Expect she's upstairs, sir. She went up after you and her had that little tiff over breakfast this morning."

"I know," remarked Broadbent with a sigh, looking round the untidy room. "Perhaps it's mainly my fault. You run upstairs and tell your mistress I've come home."

He talked to the baby whilst the girl was away, and informed the baby that mother and father were never going to quarrel again, to which baby listened with a gratified air as though it understood perfectly.

"She ain't in," reported Martha, with some concern. "Wonder where she can have got to? And her best hat—the one she wears a-Sundays—isn't 'anging up. And your Gladstin bag is gone, sir." He looked round, dazed and affrighted. "I suppose," he said aggrievedly, "I must set to and do up the fireplace and make a—— What's this?"

He snatched from the girl the torn pieces of a photograph, which he recognized as his own. The baby held out one little hand

with all an infant's desire to obtain everything that it sees.

"Little man!" said his father, looking down at him with a white face. "Little man, we're alone!"

"Yes," said Mr. Broadbent in an awed voice. "yes, it might have been. She refused me, as a matter of fact, and I heard afterward that she——"

"We will now take the third and concluding scene."

"Don't you trouble," whispered Mr. Broadbent. The inventor adjusted some brass screws at the side.

"We will go on," said the other in his deliberate manner, "say another ten years. December, 1888."

#### IV.

Mr. Broadbent saw himself seated at a closely lined dinner-table in a professional club talking earnestly with a Mr. Lanchberry, a theatrical manager to whom he had just been introduced. Mr. Broadbent saw himself gradually being persuaded to back this man's venture with his savings. He had never forgotten the circumstances, for time, which sponges out a good deal, can never wipe away the memory of foolish investment. The picture vanished and after a white interval he saw the interior of the room he occupied in 1888 in Fen Court with the date-case on the wall showing "December 24." He shivered.

You could see yourself in the windows, for the night was dark outside, and only one gas-jet under a green shade burnt in a U shape just over Broadbent's table. The clerks had gone at a late hour. The head of the firm was dining with a City company and might be looked upon as safely disposed of. Broadbent went out of his door to inspect the other rooms and make sure that he was quite alone; he returned satisfied. He sat down at his table, took out his penknife, found the ink-eraser and tipping back in his chair pulled from its niche a well-bound accounts-book. Even then, before proceeding with the work he intended to do, he took a telegram from his letter-case and reread it anxiously.

"Another week's bad business. Must



have hundred pounds Saturday. Gorgeous prospects next week.—LANCHBERRY."

Here was the situation. Lanchberry had taken every penny of the five hundred and eighty pounds which represented past savings. Was this to be given up without a chance of regaining any part of it?

He had been busy in a hurried, feverish way for a few minutes, when, looking up because the rain was making a sudden splash on the window, he thought he saw the reflection of a spot of red light. Instantly it occurred to him that this might be from the big City company cigar; if so, behind it was the head of the firm watching. He hesitated. Should he dip his pen in the metal inkstand and go up the column quickly, restoring the figures he had erased, correcting those which he had altered?

"Click!" said the machine.

"I don't want to see this," said Mr. Broadbent, hurriedly. "I know it was a narrow squeak. In point of fact, it was the head, and please let me go."

"The machine," said the inventor proudly, "will bring before you a picture of what would have happened but for a sheer accident."

Such a calm, cheerful little apartment that unless you had been there before in one capacity or another you would never have guessed it to be the Justices' Room at the Mansion House.

"John William Broadbent," said the clerk loudly, using the formula, "upon the evidence that has been given against you, you will be committed to the next sessions of the Central Criminal Court to take your trial upon charges of embezzling five hundred pounds and upon other charges of embezzlement."

"This way," said the warders, each seizing an arm. "Mind the steps!"

## V.

"He had no further intercourse with spirits," said the young woman on the platform at the end of the room. The audience began to find overcoats and wraps; the bustling caused Mr. Broadbent to sit up suddenly. "He had no further

intercourse with spirits, but lived on the total abstinence principle ever afterward, and it was said of him that he knew how to keep Christmas well if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless us, every one."

"God bless us, every one," echoed Mr. Broadbent. He found his silk hat, and as he was obstructing the way out of two young ladies, drew back to allow them to pass by and smiled apologetically; to his surprise, they smiled back at him in a gracious manner. It was many years since a woman had smiled pleasantly at him.

"Can I have a word with you, sir, and a pen?" he said gently to the secretary, who was reckoning figures in a book.

"Pleasure!" said the secretary with great cheerfulness. "What kind of a nib, I wonder, would you——"

"Any kind will do," replied Mr. Broadbent genially, "so long as it will write a pretty good check."

He had rarely received thanks, because he had so seldom given anything away, and he felt some awkwardness in receiving them now. London presented an amazingly jolly appearance to him, and he wondered why.

If Mr. Broadbent went into one department in the stores, he went into half a dozen. There was the poultry department to look in at, with so many turkeys row upon row that one suspected an optical delusion; the toy department, with white cats that were much more like cats than the real article, solemn little elephants with moving trunks, Noah's arks filled with animals as completely as their original; (he heard the young lady assistant in the toy department say to a colleague as he came away, "What a *very* pleasant old gentleman!" He half wished she had not said "old," but it was good and new to be called "pleasant").

## VI.

A determined, delicious, insinuating perfume of cooking pervaded the house where Broadbent's sister lived. You who read these words know who sent the large wooden case labeled Somebody's Starch (containing no starch at all but nearly



everything else), but Broadbent's sister didn't know and her husband could only make wild guesses. The eldest boy, who had been in the City only a month and had already learned caution, said that he thought he knew but he would rather not tell; and the baby, who was about four, on being appealed to said promptly, "Santa Claus!" with all the emphasis of a young woman who can read the world as an open book.

"Whoever it was sent them," said Broadbent's sister, and she said it more than once on Christmas morning, "you may be quite sure it wasn't my brother John."

"Catch him!" said her husband satirically.

"Tell you what wouldn't be half a bad idea, mother. Write to him and pretend you thought he sent them and thank him for the turkey and all the rest of it," said the eldest boy.

"We mustn't joke about it," said Broadbent's sister. "Sit down, all of you! Father, take the carving-knife out into the passage and sharpen it, and whilst you're gone baby can say grace."

Baby took her duty as the newest Bishop in the House of Lords takes his, but gave the grace all in one long, incomprehensible word; her mother and her big brother said "Amen!" and father came back from his work in the passage.

"Now, if this is a tender bird," said father cautiously, "I shall be able to carve it as easily as anything."

"It's a lovely bird," declared Broadbent's sister. "I never thought it would go in the oven."

It was just as the turkey was going off, and as the baby girl was about to leave in order to enjoy the rare privilege of lending a hand with the plum-pudding, that an interruption came. A sharp knock sounded on the front door.

"If it's a beggar," said Broadbent's sister, "tell him to wait and I'll see what I can find."

Clearly the visitor was no beggar, for he followed on the boy's heels into the dining-room, and he was talking in a loud, bombastic way, neither of which things is an attribute of the suburban tramp.

"Why, if it isn't Brother John!"

"Well," he said gruffly, "you seem to be doing pretty well."

"It's Christmas Day," mentioned his sister, rather nervously. "Let me take your overcoat, John. Years and years since you've been to see us."

"Now, why on earth should people feed and stuff themselves on one day in the year and starve all the rest of the time? Eh, what?"

"We don't starve, Mr. Broadbent," urged his brother-in-law with spirit. "Fact of it is, we've had some rather handsome presents this year."

"Any use asking you to pick a bit, John?" suggested his sister, placing a cushion in the arm-chair.

"No," replied Mr. Broadbent shortly. "Go on with your meal; I dine late. What is *your* name?" to the little girl; "I rather like the look of you."

"My name's Gladys," answered the baby in her shrill voice, "and I don't like you one bit."

"Speak nicely to your uncle, dear," begged Broadbent's sister.

Hard sometimes for a man to pretend to be pleasant when he feels annoyed, harder still for him to pretend to be annoyed when he feels pleased. I am afraid you will be disappointed with Mr. Broadbent when I tell you that not twenty minutes later, after the plum-pudding had been taken away a perfectly hopeless, helpless mass, and after he had been induced to take a small glass of the very excellent port wine, Mr. Broadbent entirely forgot the part which he had decided to play, and discarding his grimness of visage gave them an amusing account of his journey by omnibus and tram-car, and his own mistaken effort to go in at 18 instead of 28. Mr. Broadbent was laughing, positively laughing. His sister looked at him nervously and recorked the bottle of port with an emphatic punch of her fist; the big boy and his father stood away with caution: but the baby, Gladys, was on Mr. Broadbent's knees.

"Now let's have an orange," cried the baby girl, "and then we'll have games." If there was any possible hope of making you believe the facts, I would tell you how Mr. Broadbent carried on with the baby girl after he had shared an orange with



her and given her the larger half. How Mr. Broadbent, becoming a mere bond-slave to the young tyrant, had to pretend to be, variously, an elephant at the Zoological Gardens, able to carry children on its back and to eat nuts and figs; a defeated soldier taken into captivity behind the piano; an ignorant child at school to be whipped by a dogmatic instructress; a polite little boy at an alleged children's tea-party. When the time came for real tea, Mr. Broadbent said that he supposed he had better be going, but his sister would not hear of this, declaring that if he did go without having a cup she would assume that Gladys had bothered him.

"Don't go!" cried the baby Gladys, hugging him. "I'm beginning to like you ver' much." Mr. Broadbent stooped and kissed a little person for the first time since his boyhood. "'Sides, you haven't seen my Noah's ark."

This was conclusive. Mr. Broadbent was induced without difficulty to take the easy-chair, and whilst the baby girl was bringing the ark downstairs he inquired about Thomas' berth. It appeared that Thomas' berth was, so to speak, only in the steerage and meant but eight shillings a week, which by the time railway fares and lunch expenses were settled really left a very narrow margin indeed. Mr. Broadbent ordered the young man to give a specimen of his handwriting, and Thomas had the inspiration to write in a good round hand:—

"DEAR UNCLE: It has been a great pleasure to see you here to-day. I hope you will spend every Christmas Day with us in future.—Your obedient servant,

"THOMAS NICHOLL, Jun."

"Why," cried Mr. Broadbent with something like tears in his eyes, "you're the very lad we want at Fen Court. What do you say now to fifteen shillings a week as a start?"

They would have said a great deal about this, but at that moment the little girl staggered into the room with the enormous ark.

Here it was that Mr. Broadbent by one slip betrayed his amateurishness in tact and generosity and showed that he had much to learn.

"We never had toys like that," remarked Broadbent's sister, "in *our* young days."

"Do you remember the piece of white coral you used to be so proud of? Mother used to stand it in the window at Eversholt Street, didn't she?"

"Poor mother," sighed Broadbent's sister. "Do you ever go to Finchley Cemetery, John?"

"We'll go together next Sunday," he said, rather awkwardly. "Why, bless my soul! this is the biggest Noah's ark I've ever seen."

"It's the biggest Noah's ark that ever was," said little Gladys proudly.

"It couldn't have cost a penny less than two pounds," declared her father.

"Thirty-seven and six!" blurted out Mr. Broadbent.

A moment of silence. They all looked at each other.

"Why, then," cried the baby girl, "it was you."

Useless after this to do anything but to make complete confession, to protest against the thanks that were loaded upon him, and to hide as well as he could his own gratification. They had not finished when the little girl began to rub at her eyes and Mr. Broadbent assured her that the dustman was coming, but Gladys declared emphatically that she was not going to bed until he left, and he therefore announced his departure. So they fetched his coat and hat, and his sister adjusted his muffler in the most comfortable way. There remained something to do, and he found, as other adults have found, that to give coins to young people in a manner at once furtive and discreet is a trick that baffles the most ingenious.

"I can never thank you enough, dear John," cried his sister at the front door. The others made a happy body-guard behind her. Outside, the blustering wind had gone home tired and the night was clear, the sky full of stars.

"You must never thank me at all."

"But I shan't forget all your kindness, John, and I shall always, always——"

"The world's been very good to me," said Mr. Broadbent, pausing thoughtfully at the lowest step—"I'm going to try to be good to the world."





“DEAREST, listen close; I want to tell you a story.”

Her head was thrown back, along the lounge, with her whole figure; the fingers of her left hand were at her temples, pushing aside the yellow curls. Her blue eyes were upon me.

O little yellow curl against the ear-lobe! O little yellow curl! I bent forward and kissed it. She let me kiss.

“Hush,” she said. “Not to-night. Try to forget.”

“What?”

“That you love me. Oh, Maarten, don’t!” She had sprung up; she was far from me on the balcony overhanging the lake, a white vision against the blueness of the deep Italian night. I waited a moment, then I went after her. She motioned me away. “I want to tell you my story,” she said, in a tone that was almost a gasp. “Don’t make it impossible. Help me. Let me alone.”

I stood silent in the window. When a woman speaks to a man, it is her voice he must go by, not what she says.

The night was lovely beyond endurance. In the far, far distance a dozen bells were tinkling; a dozen lights were moving across the water. The air was full of entrancing scents. Down below, somewhere among the laurels, a man’s voice rose and fell softly in solitary song.

She stood against the massive parapet; a flimsy whiteness hung about her breast

and arms. I saw that the breast was heaving.

“Do you believe that we live again after death?” she said suddenly. “Mind how you answer. It all depends on that. I know you say you do. We all say. But do you mean it?—tell me. If you think not—if you are a—what do they call it?—an agnostic, tell me honestly, though you have never told me before!”

“Dearest——” I began, but she did not allow me to continue. She turned upon me; her vehemence was extraordinary.

“We have been married seven years, and I know, of course, all you say and think and do, in matters of religion. Aye, and think. But there are so many thinkings, and thinkings beneath them, that we never take the trouble to find out for ourselves. Look yourself in the naked face, before God, to-night, and tell me—Do you believe—are you certain for yourself of a here-after?” Her voice was heavy with passion; her hands were clasped; her eyes were close to my own.

I answered, “I believe.”

“But you are not certain?”

“I am certain, because I believe.”

She fell back. “I wish it had been otherwise,” she said faintly. “And yet, of course it couldn’t be, for it is true.”

I waited, understanding nothing, troubled down into the deepest sinkings of my heart.

“Let me tell you here—here,” she said.



"Do not let us go back into the room. Do you think any one would hear us?"

I glanced up the vast façade of the sleeping hotel. The hour was very late, past midnight; the whole place was very silent. The fishermen's lights and the fishermen's bells came across the water still.

"Yes," I said. "Yes; they would hear you. Some one would hear you." A foolish trembling had seized me. I led her back to the couch.

"Then for heaven's sake," she cried, "turn——" She started up, herself ran to the electric knob, and struck the room with sudden darkness. Only for a moment; the soft starlight came flooding in.

"When you married me," she began, "I was a girl of twenty. You barely knew me. You remember all about it; does one ever forget? We met at a ball; six months later we were married; we have loved each other ever since."

"Yes, dearest; does one ever forget?"

"Oh, Maarten, tell me—repeat it—we have loved each other ever since!"

"Dear, dear darling, I have never seen you like this before! You are ill; you are overtired. Let us go and sleep; you will tell me to-morrow."

"Maarten, did not I beg of you not to come to Bellagio? Did not I entreat you?"

"I thought it was only a fad of yours. You wouldn't give any reason. And Pallanza is such a beastly place. We will leave to-morrow."

"You know little of my youth; you see, it is all the dull time that we didn't live together." She laughed sadly. "It was a very dull time. Shut up in the gloomy house alone with father and poor Mlle. Fifard. Maarten, it is only this. I was lonely and dull, and my head—till I met you, dear teacher—contained little but foolishness. Out of the long French romances—you know them; I never will look at them now—I had made myself a dream-hero; many girls do, I believe?" She stopped anxiously.

"All, I should think," I answered, laughing cheerfully. "Was it *Lancelot*, the faithless, of the Lake?"

"My hero I had called"—her voice dropped to a whisper—"Sir Constant. I do not know why, except that none of the knights in the romances was called so. He

—he became an important figure in my empty existence. You will laugh—oh, my husband, I can tell you no more. Do not laugh. Above all—it is too solemn, too sad!—do not laugh. Wait to the end." She paused after those words, which struck a cold chill to my heart. It was some time before she continued, speaking very slowly.

"Yes, my hero came to play a very important part in my life. There was nothing else, you see, nothing else to fill it. When I tried to do anything useful for any one, father scolded and poor mademoiselle said it was unladylike, immodest. '*Ma chère, soyez toujours modeste.*' I drew a portrait of him—yes, I must tell you that—tell you all. I drew a good many—sketches, paintings. Even you, Maarten, admit that I draw and paint well."

"Even I?"

"Yes, you are very critical. I like that. I like you to disapprove of me. It shows that you care. He was not at all like you. He was very dark, almost swarthy. But he was very pale also; his skin was deadly-white, and his eyes were cold and terrible, yet full of gray light like steel." She had bent forward; her gaze was fixed on the lofty heaven and its stars.

"He was beautiful in my dreams, and strong and manly. He did wonders, like the knights in the romances—wonders of bravery and gentleness and skill. He relieved the oppressed; he released prisoners; he rescued young maidens. You see, it is all foolishness, dearest—until, until——"

She sank her head on her hands. "Oh, the end!" she said.

"Indeed, he was not like me." The words were on my lips, perhaps a little bitter, but I did not speak them. "He was a good man, at any rate, a harmless familiar," I said.

"I had painted my hero, composed verses, lengthy stories, about him—not that I ever wrote these down; that would have seemed a desecration. I had walked with him in the wood, in fancy, in the moonlight, when he rode out to do great deeds, and I bade him Godspeed! O Maarten, I was only a child. Was it wrong? The great deeds, it was these attracted me; I yearned for something beyond the old house and Fifard."



"I don't wonder. It's all as simple as daylight. Why ever didn't you tell me about your Sir Constant before?"

"Maarten, there came a night when I saw him in my dreams."

"No wonder, after mooning about him all day!"

"I saw him a first time, then often. He was dressed as a knight should be, but not always. Sometimes he wore a long black cloak and a wide soft hat."

I had promised not to laugh. I had no desire to do so. We laugh at another man's wife, possibly, not our own, when her voice rings with fear like that.

"Tell me, if you can—I have asked myself a hundred times—how came I to see, in any dream, my knight in such dress as that?"

"I don't know. Does it matter much?"

"It matters everything. It decides my fate."

"Your fate, dearest, is in your own hands, and in mine. It is safe, and it doesn't depend on any knight in a wide soft hat."

"You say that, but you know it is not so. Our fates are fashioned for us, outside us. We struggle, at the last moment, caught in the net."

"I cannot admit that," I said.

"No, do not admit it! That is right!" she cried aloud. "Help me not to admit it, to deny it. It is a lie. We decide our own fates! Ah, me!—listen. Let me speak quick. He came to me oftener in my dreams. And he spoke to me. Things he said, deep and solemn, few and strange. When I woke, they went with me through the day. He found faults in me I had never imagined before. And he said to me words such as no one had ever spoken to me before. All around me noticed the change in those years; the servants—don't let us speak of it. Fifard found me out one day with my portrait before me. I confessed."

"You could not have found a worse confidante," I cried, angry and distressed.

"Poor thing, she was so pleased! She talked to me for hours of my beautiful knight. But I did not like that. I prayed her to be silent. I crept away from her tattle into the woods, and I heard him there. I met his face in crowds, suddenly.

come and gone. And when I sat down to the piano, I caught his voice in the music. I caught it distinctly; I could have recognized it anywhere. I would look round, suddenly stopping; I knew him to be behind me, I felt him—just as I turned, he was gone."

She had risen from the couch; she stood, trembling, a tall figure in the starlight. Her voice pulsed with emotion. What could I do but let her hasten on?

"I will tell you what I never thought to tell even to you," she gasped. "One sentence he said so often to me in dreams, aye, in daylight, in whispers at my ear, so distinctly, the sounds remain graven on my soul, though I do not know their meaning. I do not know the language; I have never dared to inquire which it was, what they meant. Let me speak them to you. Listen!" She came close to me and enunciated slowly, "Je näher mir, je näher Deinem Grab."

I started involuntarily. The words came to me like an echo out of some song of Schiller's. Even in the softened darkness she saw, or felt, the start.

"I fancy they are German," she continued. "Now you know why I have always refused to learn that language, though you were so anxious to teach me. You are not angry with me, are you now? I sing Italian. I don't want to understand those words; I believe they must mean something very terrible. When he said them his face and voice always grew terrible—terrible. And the last word, I imagine, must have something to do with 'grave.'"

"No!" I cried, "no!" for a great fear was coming upon me. The night was too silent. Her voice was too laden with awe.

I knew that she smiled. "Do not tell me; I do not want to know," she said. "No, dear; we never will read Goethe or Heine together. I will never ask you for the meaning of that sentence. Others he said in English; I recall them: 'I am living for the future.' 'The present is nothing; the future alone is eternal. Wait and work. I also am waiting; wait and work.'"

"These are no wonderful sayings," I exclaimed, recovering somewhat my self-possession, which had been upset by the German quotation. "It requires no supernatural wisdom to produce them."





*Drawn by George T. Tobin.*

"I KNEW HIM TO BE BEHIND ME."



She caught at the word "supernatural"; it struck her down beneath its weight. She sank under it. "There was nothing," she said, "perhaps, positively supernatural till we met him on the boat."

"What?" I screamed. I could not help myself.

"We met him here, between Bellagio and Como, on this lake, on the boat."

I had steadied myself somewhat for her sake. "It was a fancy," I murmured.

"And Fifard? You forget Fifard, who had seen my dream-drawings. It was she that first saw him sitting by the side, and pointed him out to me. Yes, he was sitting there; we first saw him at Cadenabbia."

"A fanciful resemblance."

"It was an hour before I ventured to get up and walk past him. He sat there in his long black cloak, and he took off his hat to me. I do not know why, nor did he, he said. Before we knew how, we were talking together. We talked of many things, art, literature, beauty, religion—the deepest, the sweetest—I was ignorant as a child, he omniscient, so it seemed to my ignorance—he got out at the next landing-place; it was all over in twenty minutes. All over and more dreamful than a dream."

"It was a dream. I mean the resemblance."

"In the midst of our conversation he said to me: 'I am living for the future. The present is nothing; the future alone is eternal.' Was that a dream?"

"Yes," I said falteringly. "He did not actually speak those words."

"And in taking leave, as he held my hand and looked into my eyes, 'Wait and work,' he said. Was that a dream? There were but few sentences before in our dream-meetings. And these he spoke."

"So you thought then or afterward?"

"And his voice! Oh, my God, the likeness of his voice!" After that she lay silent. The lights had died away upon the water; the bells had long been still.

"Soon after we came back from our trip, I met you," she said presently; "a new world was opened to me; the old seemed to sink from sight. I have loved you, my husband—say that I have been a good wife."

I drew her resisting in my arms and

kissed her on both half-closed eyes. She opened them languidly.

"But I, have I been a good husband?" I said.

"You have been my earthly star."

"But the heavenly?"

For a moment she did not answer, and all the fear and dread that had been closing in upon me took solid, overwhelming shape. I went out to the balcony, stood leaning heavily over the balustrade.

When I looked round, she was gone.

Next morning I said: "I am going to take our tickets after breakfast. I should like, if you don't mind, to go on to Milan to-day."

She looked up quickly. "By Como?"

"Well, no; we might just as well go round by Lugano."

She flushed. "Maarten, you won't think me humorsome, will you? I should like to take the usual route." I did not endeavor to dissuade her, anxious to avoid the appearance of attaching importance to anything connected with the place. Anxious above all to get away from it.

My wife talked of other things, and yet I could see she was preoccupied. Once she reverted directly to the subject. "I should never have spoken of it," she said suddenly, "had we not come here."

"I am glad we came here, then. There should be no secrets between us."

"This is not a secret between us, Maarten. It is a secret outside us. I don't know whether you understand what I mean. I think I do."

"You mean that it is a secret outside me," I replied, a little irritably.

She did not refute what was almost an accusation. She painfully put her hand to her head. To me she has always seemed most entrancingly beautiful because of that statuesque symmetry of form and movement, which had something classical in them, while the modern unrest of intellectuality—disgusting word, but it expresses my meaning—leaped and played underneath like a flame in an alabaster vase.

It was only when we were in the omnibus driving down to the pier that she seemed to awaken from enforced repose.

"Supposing," she said—and her big eyes dilated—"supposing that—on the boat——"





*Drawn by George T. Tobin.*

" 'I SUDDENLY SAW HIM COMING TOWARD US FROM THE STERN.' "



"I would it were so. I would give anything it should be so," I replied.

"What?"

"If this man you met on the boat were there again, it would prove him to be an ordinary inhabitant of these parts. It would explain your whole story, which, of course, really needs no explanation. A fancied resemblance, that is all."

She gave me no answer, feeling, perhaps, that it was hopeless—unwilling to repeat all she had said about similarity of voice and words as well as of figure and face. To her, evidently, this being who had come into her life was of a higher essence, or, at least, of a higher intellectual and moral rank, than either she or I. Somewhere in this passing dream which is the world he was struggling on through daily self-development toward that loftier future which passes not. What the link was, yonder, between him and her unworthiness she could not have told. Nor did she desire to retain such link, could she have severed it, and the while she still clung to its fascination with trembling, terrible joy.

I am sorry now that I tried to explain away the whole story. Sorry in the face of what happened immediately after. And yet what else could I have done that had been better?

There were a number of tourists and country people on the boat when it came up from Menaggio. With some difficulty we found a seat near the bows. People, of course, were talking and laughing everywhere. There was a certain amount of confusion, especially about the luggage.

My wife looked round nervously; then she sat down and fastened her eyes on the hills. We talked of one place and another. I looked out particulars in "Murray," and we quarreled in connection with a new villa nearly completed on a promontory—over several questions of taste. We were often divided in our admirations, and enjoyed discussions on such subjects, not demanding that either should be convinced.

When I looked up from a close survey of the map, I perceived that our part of the deck—the first-class top platform—had emptied. Rugs and bags lay about everywhere by unoccupied seats. A bell had rung some time ago, without our observing

it, for the table d'hôte luncheon. We had eaten something before leaving the hotel.

I got up to stretch my limbs, and my wife immediately came with me. We descended to the lower deck, which seemed also deserted, and we sat down there just above the engine-house.

It was then that I suddenly saw him coming toward us from the stern. I do not know how he came into sight—whether he had turned some corner I cannot tell. I looked round desperately to meet my wife's gaze, to draw off her attention—what shall I say? I was too late; already she, too, had seen him.

He came up the silent deck in his long black cloak and slouch hat; I knew at once that it was he. The next moment my heart gave a leap as I realized this natural solution I myself had desired. Some lawyer or doctor of the neighborhood. The village apothecary.

He came up the silent deck. He was close to us. And, all of a sudden, his face lighted up with a great, glad smile. His eyes were fixed on my wife; I do not think he saw me. He lifted his hat with a sweep against the sky, but passed very slowly on.

And, as he passed, he spoke the words—I heard them distinctly—he spoke them in fluent German, not such as an Italian would speak:—"Je näher mir, je näher Deinem Grab."

He passed us. My first thought was for my wife. I caught at her, to support her if necessary, but she remained sitting calmly erect, her eyes—and mine—following the stranger. He passed down the companion-way and disappeared.

I started up to follow, furious at what I thought must be a trick of some sort, a practical joke. We seize at these explanations even when they are palpably impossible. By the time I had rushed after him, the man was gone from sight. Below us the clash of knives and forks, everybody busy with the dishes; stewards rushing hotly to and fro. I searched the ship in vain amidst the confusion; I hurried back anxiously to my wife, unwilling to leave her to herself; I found she had fainted.

The next station the boat stopped at was



Cernobbio. I got her off at once and away to the hotel. I was anxious that she should not open her eyes among the surroundings upon which she had closed them. Nor did it appear that she would soon recover consciousness. I hoped to drive on to Como later in the day.

It was the 18th of September last, at half-past one o'clock, in the full light and sunshine of a peerless Italian afternoon.

At Cernobbio we found a local doctor, more than sufficient for what first required to be done. I telegraphed, by his advice, to a professor in Milan. An English phy-

On the tenth day she died.

I hastened back with the dear remains to my home in England. Amidst all the torment of my loss, one strange fever consumed me—the longing to face with my own eyes those old drawings and paintings she had spoken of in the night at Bellagio.

I am sitting before them now, in front of her bureau; the long drawer is open; they are scattered, right and left, on the desk. Sketches, water-color drawings, crayons, large and small, of a knight in full armor, in different poses, amid differ-



*Drawn by George T. Tobin.*

"ON THE TENTH DAY SHE DIED."

sician joined us in the course of the following day.

During the first night, as I was sitting watching by the bedside, she stirred from her state of complete unconsciousness, moved and spoke. But the words were, to begin with, incomprehensible, then incoherent. A couple of hours later she was manifestly delirious.

For ten days she lay raging in a brain-fever. In her utterances, all on one subject, the German word "Grab" sounded ceaselessly like an echo and a knell. Once or twice I saw in her eyes that she recognized me, and that was worst of all.

ent surroundings. But the face is always the same face: it is the face of the man who passed me on the boat.

I have written it all down, and, inevitably because that form came most natural to me, the recital has taken the form of a story. It is an account of facts. I offer no explanation, for I can find none. I know that during those seven years of our marriage my wife loved me as loyally and as deeply as man was ever loved on this earth. Of such things I cannot speak in public. Nor shall I. For these lines are the last I shall ever write, and they will not be published till after my death.



# THE SOUL OF MOZART.

BY W.E.P. FRENCH.



YOU are the stenographer? Very good. Nurse, you may go.

Take this, please, exactly as I dictate it.

In the fall of 1891, I, Stephen Van Ingen, person of leisure and student of the violin, met at the Players' Club in New York a very charming old man, music-mad like myself. It chanced that we had studied under the same master at Munich, though nearly thirty years apart; and common interests, associations and traditions in things harmonic paved the way to an acquaintance that ripened rapidly. His wife, a handsome, stately gentlewoman of the ultra-conservative type, was with him in the city, and, by his invitation, I called upon her and spent two or three agreeable evenings with them at their hotel. She was intensely race-proud, absolutely tone-deaf and cherished for all musicians, including her husband, a wondering, tolerant pity. While I never heard her say so in so many words, I feel sure that she thoroughly acquiesced in the saying of the famous Frenchman that "music is spoiled silence," and endorsed that other bit of clever philistinism, "The piano is a very much underestimated instrument; it has

wondrously enhanced the value of silence." However, though I played, and had had a maternal grandmother of no especial pretension to birth, who had been a noted concert-singer, my father's people were of a good Albany family; so the old lady graciously overlooked the fact that my ancestress had sung on the stage, as well as my own unfortunate tendency to create friction between horsehair and catgut, and very cordially joined in her husband's invitation to me to visit them in their country home before the holidays. No date was set, but late in November a bulky telegram was brought me, which read:—

"Will you not come to us on the 1st? The musical sensation of your life and the century awaits you. Come by the morning train. I have the symphony in C with the fugue, and you shall play it on my pet Amati. We lunch at one and dine at seven. There shall be a German dinner in honor of the sensation, and we shall drink to it and to her in Assmannhäuser Auslese. The marvel will be in the evening, but we shall have a harmonious afternoon. Bring a large trunk and your Stradivarius, for you must make a long stay."

Then followed a funny sentence in



German, of which, as well as of the name of the wonderful red Rhine wine, the operator had made a sad mess; but I recognized at once the choleric entreaty of our old music-master, a literal translation being, "Dear Mr. God in Heaven! can I not make you accelerate yourself?" I laughed over the memories evoked, and I was amused by the despatch. Who but a musician, with a fine and lofty disregard for dirty money, would send such a voluminous telegram? Yet, my heart was warmed and touched by it, too; for the rare lavishness seemed the grace-note of a beautiful old-fashioned hospitality, softening the vulgar rag-time of our brutal commercialism; and I treated myself to the luxury of a comfortably courteous number of words in my acceptance by wire.

I endeavored to "accelerate myself," and a few mornings later I took the train for the pretty colonial town on the west shore of the Hudson, near which was my friend's home. It was the first day of December, 1891, brilliant, cold and clear. At the station my host met me, and I was presently seated in a roomy sleigh of Russian make, drawn by three fine horses hitched abreast, who covered in an hour the twelve miles of road through the hills that led to our destination.

"Beautiful beasts, aren't they?" said my friend, as he urged them a bit.

"They are matched and gaited to a semitone," I acquiesced. "Is the gray mare, as usual, the better horse?"

"Yes; she is thoroughbred; the others are trotting-stock, and when my lady takes a notion to run they are outclassed. Here is a level bit. See!" He spoke to the team and let them out. The mare at once took up a long smooth gallop and the horses trotted easily abreast of her, pulling evenly. The pace was very fast, but it was nothing to what they could do, as I soon learned. There was a shrill whistle, followed by a report like a pistol-shot from the long whip. The mare flung herself into her tremendous stride, and the gallant beasts beside her trotted their hardest, but she was pulling the sleigh. Another instant and they broke, and the three straining animals were in a mad run. It was very exciting and exhilarating, with a good spice of danger thrown in; but the bound-

ing creature in the middle was leading and evidently enjoying herself, while her running-mates were straining every nerve to keep out of the way of the sleigh.

As the gait slackened, and they fell into a walk before a long hill-climb, I inquired as to the nature of the sensation promised in the telegram.

"There are two," said my host, patting the steaming horses with his whipstock—neither he nor I then dreaming of the others that fate was preparing for us. "The first is a great musician, the finest instrumentalist of our day. She is past-grand-mistress of the organ, the harp and the piano. In touch and technique she is without a peer, in expression and execution she is faultless, and she not only grasps but can convey the subtlest shades of meaning in the works of the great composers."

"Who and whence is this miracle?" I asked, as he paused.

"She is Aloysia Weber, of Munich, the great-great-granddaughter of the woman of the same name who was Mozart's first love and whose sister he married. She is, also, a pupil of our old master, and it was at his house Mrs. Hasbrouck and I saw her first when we were abroad five years ago. Have I excited your curiosity?"

"You have indeed," I replied; "I am all ears."

"You will be all eyes, too, my boy," put in Mr. Hasbrouck, "and I predict a tumble for you, Mr. Brave Bachelor."

"Forewarned is forearmed," quoth I, hanging on with both hands, as the sleigh, bounding from a "thank-you-ma'am," took a longer flight than usual.

When my host had reduced the gait to that of an ordinary express-train, my breath came back to me, and I made inquiry as to the second sensation.

"It is a marvel just as Aloysia is. She has not seen it yet, but I shall spring it on her this evening." He paused, then resumed thoughtfully: "It is queer how things sometimes happen in this strange muddle of a world—queer and uncanny. Last year, in Vienna, I attended an auction-sale of curios and bought, among other things, a very good bit of woodcarving, a small music-cabinet, on the door of which is a cleverly done Pan and pipes, the reeds at his feet twisted into the date '1756'



and the vignette 'J. C. W. A. M.' Do you place the initials?"

"What a piece of luck!" I exclaimed—"Johannes Chrysostomos Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and the year of his birth. You must have paid a long price for it."

"No, I got it for a song. It was fearfully dirty, and so decrepit that I sent it to a shop in Albany to be set up. Thereby hangs the discovery. The cabinet-maker—an honest man—found a false back in it and tucked away therein a flat packet, sealed, initialed, and dated less than a month before Mozart's death. There were also a few lines on the wrapper, faint and shaky, and the writing was blistered here and there, as if with tears. Somehow, the words seem to have taken a strong hold on me. And, oh, the pity of it!—to think that the dying message and the love-song of one of the world's greatest masters of melody should have failed to reach the woman he worshiped." We were both silent a moment, then the dear old man, with a little catch in his voice, repeated in German the inscription from the wrapper, which, freely translated, was as follows:—

"Thou, best beloved and adored, to whom I gave my love and my idolatry, to thee I give this the last music that my hand shall ever write, and in it I have striven to put the soul-worship of thy lover and a hope that shall outlive death. No one hath seen this score, save Goethe only, and the words he hath written to my poor song shall reach thee by another means with information how thou mayest——" There, as he told me, the writing ceased.

For a little time there were no sounds other than the rhythmical hoof-beats, the jangle of the bells and the steady swish of the runners. Then my companion voiced my own thought:

"They were meant for his wife's sister. When the end is near, a man's thoughts fly back to his first love. A century ago! Perhaps she has heard in that other land we guess so much about the music we shall hear to-night and the words we shall never hear, played on instruments we know not of and sung by voices immortally sweet."

We were skimming up an avenue of sugar-maples, and before us was the big, hip-roofed, much-verandaed old house, so overgrown with ivy that the rough gray

stone of its walls was but little in evidence.

Mrs. Hasbrouck met and welcomed me in the spacious hall where the cheerful glow from a huge fire of chestnut logs fell with loving benison on Flemish oak and Spanish leather, and flickered in rosy content from the copper sides of a tall, slim, cylindrical vessel with an absurdly long handle that stood half buried in the glowing wood-embers. There was a delicious and alluring smell in the air, which I presently perceived came from the bubbling contents of the copper pot, and my mental analysis of the ingredients had just begun, when my host advanced toward the fire, rubbing his hands and quoting:—

"Nose! Nose! Nose! Nose!  
And what gave thee that jolly red nose?  
Cinnamon and ginger, nutmeg and cloves,  
And they gave me my jolly red nose."

"I hope you like mulled Burgundy, old fellow, and that the long drive has created a 'right spot' for it?"

I assented eagerly; and he, still talking, and suiting the action to the word, finished a very interesting bit of cookery:

"This recipe was revealed to me by the shade of Bacchus in a vision. You bring a quart of Burgundy, a little sugar, a twist of lemon-peel and a couple of wineglassfuls of spiced rum to a boil; rub a red-hot poker over a bit of clean stick to get off the ashes, and plunge it, thus, to the bottom of the brew, which burns off the excess of alcohol in this pretty violet flame and is, besides, 'mellerin' to the organ.' Then you pour the heated liquid into these three tall thin tumblers, in each of which, you perceive, is a small piece of roasted apple and a scrap of toast; hand the glasses, muffled in napkins, to your victims; and drink, as I do to you, dear guest—a welcome as warm as the wine."

I long to dwell on these dear, generous, hospitable people and their ideal home, wherein everything was for use, comfort and beauty, and nothing for show; but I have my story to tell and the time is short. Miss Weber, I learned, had been summoned to New York to confer with her manager, but would return that afternoon.

After luncheon, Mr. Hasbrouck and I sneaked off to the music-room, a large octagon in a tower wing, walls and ceiling paneled in lustrous white walnut, the





Designed by George T. Tibbels.

"MRS. HARBROUCK . . . WELCOMED ME IN THE SPACIOUS HALL."



shadow-boxes of perhaps a dozen pictures (a spirited Orpheus holding spell-bound with his lyre a fawn and a panther, an exquisite Sappho, and several portraits of the famous composers) sunk flush with the wood, and little other ornament, save an oriel-window in stained glass on either side of the great organ whose pipes towered to the lofty ceiling. There I was shown the marvelous manuscript so long lost to the world, and there my host and I amused ourselves with sonata, aria and scherzo until it was time for him to start for the station to meet Miss Weber. We had hardly begun to play, when there was a soft thud against one of the windows and the insistent cry of a cat demanding to be let in. Mr. Hasbrouck laughed, said, "I might have known Wolfgang would insist on joining us," rose, and raised the sash. The cat marched sedately in, and leaping to the top of a music-stool, crouched there, surveying us gravely and calmly. A superb beast, dignified and irresponsible, with a coat like that of a silver-tip bear—black as jet, but sprinkled all over with snow-white hairs somewhat longer than the soft, close coat of inky fur, making the animal look as though he had been lightly powdered. I don't like cats, but this one was extraordinarily large and curiously beautiful. His gray hairs, I presumed, indicated extreme age, and I inquired if he was not the Methuselah of his race.

"No," responded my host, picking up his violin; "he is only about five years old, and, barring his size, he looks just as he did when we got him as a kitten in Salzburg. We named him Wolfgang partly because he came from Mozart's birthplace; partly because, while he was still a round puffball playing with strings, he would leave his milk to listen to music, and would yowl like a little black demon over persistent false notes or a discord. Play a little Chopin or Bach, then a bar or two of Mozart, and see what happens."

I began a favorite passage of mine from the delicious Eleventh Nocturne, covertly watching the cat. He was evidently pleased, his eyelids opening and closing softly, his tail slightly tremulous, and the deepest purr I have ever heard coming out of him. I changed suddenly to the selection from the mass we had been playing,

and my host joined in. The purring ceased, the vibrant tail was still, and the unwinking eyes watched us intently. The animal seemed not to breathe, and appeared to listen in every hair.

Mr. Hasbrouck is an exceedingly good violinist, so I was much surprised when, after a particularly difficult passage, which he had rendered with great accuracy and brilliance, his bowing suddenly became jerky, then lagged, and, finally, there was the jar of a false note.

The effect on our small audience was immediate and electrical. He sprang to his feet with a quick snarl; his eyes, which a moment before had been narrow onyx ellipses in disks of tourmalin, were balls of tawny, smoldering fire ringed with emerald; his tail was a club; his ears were flattened against his head; one spiteful paw was raised with every claw showing; and through his sharp, bared teeth he spat and hissed at us. We both ceased playing, and Mr. Hasbrouck spoke kindly and soothingly to the excited and angry animal; but he snarled again, leaped to the floor and disappeared, in offended majesty, under a divan, whence every blandishment to persuade him to come out was met by sulky growls. The whole performance was unusual and bizarre, and touched one's sense of the ludicrous; but wonder, pity and an ill-defined uneasiness were among my emotions, and, dominating all else, an unmotivated desire to hunt the thing out of the room.

My host's bow was going again, and softly, tenderly there floated through the splendid room in delicate minors a lovely little German lullaby. The low tones ceased, and he turned to me with a half-laugh and an apologetic tone in his voice.

"Poor old Wolfgang! I always play that after I have teased him. Do you know, I sometimes wonder if Pythagoras did not make a shrewd guess at the truth in his theory of the transmigration of souls."

"My dear sir," I remarked with some heat, "no human soul ever emitted such sounds or had such a temper as that cat. I will admit, if you choose, that he is possessed of a devil, and an uncommonly dangerous and vicious one. If I were blessed with a quadruped of like disposition, I



should find means to induce it to rush violently down a steep place and perish in the sea." There was a peculiarly vindictive growl from the basement of the divan, as I finished.

"Take care!" cautioned the old gentleman. "He knows, as well as a deaf person, when he is being discussed; but there is no real harm in him.—It is just the musical temperament," he added dryly.

We played until time to start for the station, when, being left to my own devices, I had a pleasant chat with Mrs. Hasbrouck, and retired to the library to write a letter. Later, I went to my room, and had hardly begun to dress for dinner, when the sleigh arrived. A stud, escaping from my fingers with the total depravity inherent in its kind, concealed itself with such malicious intelligence that the resultant game of hide-and-seek considerably delayed me. As I descended the stairs, a master-hand was extemporizing exquisitely on the harp. Miss Weber was alone in the music-room; and I stood for a moment in the doorway, drinking in the delicious harmony and watching eagerly the gracious picture she made standing by the most graceful of all instruments. She was in the full, strong light of the high organ-lamps, I in the shadow of the arched doorway. I caught my breath at her loveliness. She was a tall woman, deep-bosomed, round-throated, full-armed, brunette-skinned. Her hair, a deep brownish-red, was loosely puffed around her face in the manner of the charming Potocka of the Berlin gallery. Her eyes, a shade or two darker, but unmistakably reddish, were long and deeply lashed. Her mouth, large, generous, full-lipped, was richly colored and charming in contour. What her other features were, I don't know or care. Beautiful hair, eyes and mouth make a beautiful woman, and she had the added bounties of coloring and outline. Ravishingly sweet as was the theme she was extemporizing, and strongly though it moved me, I realized, with a sudden startled tightening about the heart, that there might be a more imperious passion than music.

It occurred to me finally that I had no business to lurk in the semidarkness of the archway glaring at that sumptuous symphony in red and creamy flesh-tones—I for-

got to say that her dinner-gown was red—so I pulled myself together and came forward. Her hands fell from the strings, and she advanced to meet me with pleasant directness, saying in quaintly slow, painstaking English, burred with a pretty German accent, "This is Mr. Van Ingen, iss it not?"—adding, as I admitted my identity and expressed my pleasure at meeting her, "I feel that I know you yet—no, *already*—through our so kind hosts who have told much to me of yourself and of your playing."

I bowed my thanks, and, as I did so, I became conscious of a pair of coldly intent eyes watching me from behind Miss Weber. They were those of that infernal cat, seated on the trail of her gown and as close to her as he could get. "Scat!" I cried, but the brute never stirred, and the beautiful woman, making a caressing movement of her hand toward him, said kindly: "Ah, never mind; he does not trouble me. Wolfgang and I are good friends." Then in German: "Are we not, thou ink-spot?" The great black creature fawned at her, standing on his hind legs and rubbing his whiskered muzzle against her hand, while he purred like an electric fan. I hated to see the thing near her, and I was sick to kill it then and there.

Mr. and Mrs. Hasbrouck came in, and dinner was announced shortly after. It was a very good dinner, and the noble red wine in which we toasted one another and the kindly, quick-tempered old man who had taught three of us made it a jolly occasion.

Mr. Hasbrouck was plainly anxious to get back to the music-room, and before our cigars were fairly finished, he moved an adjournment thereto. As the ladies went on ahead of us, he came a little closer to me and whispered: "I am not going to give her the manuscript score till the night of the 5th, just a century after Mozart's death. We will make a centennial celebration of it." I acquiesced half-heartedly, for I was impatient to hear it, and, stepping quickly forward to pick up my hostess' handkerchief, trod on that ubiquitous and damnable cat, which let loose a most astounding squall and sought sanctuary in Miss Weber's arms, who comforted and petted the black devil. I thought she



would never put it down, but she did at last, and began to play for us. It was, indeed, both sensation and marvel. I have heard nearly all the great players of the world, but never anything like her wonderful fingering. Her instrumentation was simply marvelous, her feeling perfect, her interpretation a revelation of harmony's deepest meaning. Then she sang to our violins, mainly the folk-songs of her fatherland; but, now and again, Elsa, Brunhilde and Isolde "made the common air blossom with melody." What a voice she had! Clear, deep, vibrant, full-volumed, soft as sleep, and with an added bell-like resonance that lingered in the room when the rounded white throat had ceased to swell with the bubbling notes.

But for Wolfgang, who hung about her like her shadow, it would have been an evening of unalloyed happiness. Looking back on it, I know it to have been the happiest but one, and the most wonderful but one, of all my life.

Before I fell asleep that night, I knew that I loved Aloysia Weber, loved her with all my heart and soul, as I had never cared for any other woman, and as I could never care again. When to a man of thirty-five whose life has been full and rounded, there comes love for a mature, beautiful woman in whom he fancies he will find nearly perfect comradeship, the subtle poison takes hold of brain and blood, of sense and senses, and becomes a part of the ego of the man. I loved her so.

The next three days were dreamland. We were much together, she and I; for Mr. Hasbrouck was away part of the time, and Mrs. Hasbrouck (God bless her!) invented duties and headaches and siestas until her conscience must have atrophied. Her good husband let the cat out of the bag one afternoon (when he should have been putting that other cat *in* a bag, and the bag through a hole in the ice), as the dear old lady, after yawning elaborately behind her fan, said, "John, I think the young people will excuse us if we take our nap."

"Our nap!" repeated her liege lord, in funnily aggrieved surprise. "Why, my dear, I never knew you to lie down in the afternoon. I have been trying to induce you to for forty years."

Aloysia blushed divinely, and said, in a

deliciously quaint and embarrassed mixture of English and German, that she supposed she ought to rest too, and that perhaps she was keeping poor Mr. Van Ingen up.

"Nonsense, child!" exclaimed Mrs. Hasbrouck promptly. "It is a wicked waste of time for any one but old folks. Mr. Hasbrouck"—looking at him severely—"is pleased to be facetious. I *always* sleep between meals."

Mr. Hasbrouck endeavored to indulge in a pleasantry to the effect that the meals were dinner and breakfast, but his wife was too quick for him, and, with a muttered phrase that sounded like, "Was there ever anything so stupid as a man?" she took his arm and marched him off.

A silence hung for a few minutes between Aloysia and me. Then I went over to where she sat, her beautiful eyes troubled yet shyly tender, and told her that I loved her dearly, dearly, and asked her to be my wife. Was there ever another woman so frank and brave and sweet, so quick to give? She leaned toward me with a little tender sound, half sigh, half sob; and, kneeling, I held her close and heard her whisper in her own tongue: "I love thee. Thou hast all my heart." Ah! the dear familiar "thee" and "thou"! A moment before, I had been one of many. Now I was one only—hers—and the rest of the world shut out. The man who has never heard the woman he loves change for him from the plural to the singular pronoun has missed a joy than which life holds few sweeter.

Yes, we had known each other three days only, but there is no fixed period for the growth of love—

"The immortals know each other at first sight,  
And love is of them."

How she played and sang to us that evening! And the beauty and the glory and the witchery of it all, the passionate softness of the organ tremolo, the ringing staccato of the harp, the piano's great crashing chords, the new caressing thrill in the dear voice, and the exultant happiness of the lovely woman, were for me, for me, for me—they were mine, all mine! The soul of my love was speaking to mine in the universal language—music, the soul's speech. And did my violin tell





*Drawn by George T. Tobin.*

"JOHN, I THINK THE YOUNG PEOPLE WILL EXCUSE US IF WE TAKE OUR NAP."



you, dear, of the love your lover could not put in words? You told me so, my sweet, my sweet, when you stole back for my good-night kiss.

There was no shadow on my heart that night, for the black brute that I hated and feared was sick—sick unto death, I hoped. But the next day broke coldly damp, overcast, and gloomily still. A storm was brewing, and there was an eery feeling in the air. I could not shake off the sense of oppression with which I awoke. The malign spell of the weather was upon us all, I found, when we gathered at breakfast. Ah! it was a miserable day, an accursed day, a day that smelled of evil and death and disaster. I wondered that the horror that lay hidden within it did not make the hours shriek with the birth-pang of the unthinkable thing they were to bring forth.

However, the household had pulled itself together somewhat by dinner, at which I noticed that every one drank more wine than usual, and we sat at the table for over two hours, the time being prolonged by an extraordinary and very heady punch that our host made for us out of black coffee, burnt brandy and Burgundy.

It was nearly ten that evening when we entered the music-room. Mr. Hasbrouck went at once to the cabinet, and telling again, very rapidly, what he knew of its history, took out the manuscript and gave it to Aloysia. She grew very white as she read the inscription, and gasped out in German: "My God! my God! it is the lost music, the score that Mozart wrote for my grandmother's grandmother, the words for which have been handed down for five generations in the female line. I have them here. They have never been sung. It is a tradition—a command—we were to wait for this. And I am to sing them to-night—a hundred years from the day when he died."

She hurried from the room, and when she returned went straight to the great organ, with just one loving, imploring glance at me. She pulled the lever of the hydraulic blower, spread the two manuscripts open on the rack and began to play.

A noble prelude, pulsing, blood-stirring, heart-stilling, the overture to the greatest masterpiece of melody ever dreamed in a

human brain. And then a song: a miracle in words wedded to a miracle in sound; a thing so ineffably, unhumanly beautiful that we hushed our very breaths to hear; a song of love and longing, of grief and joy, of pain and parting, of loss and death; a thing weird, awful, exquisite, throbbing through the great room, flooding the whole house, drowning the howl of the storm that raged without, filling the shuddering air with its mad, passionate protest, whispering of fear and of hope, sobbing with the despair of a lost soul, and thundering in fierce, magnificent crescendo love's final triumph over time and fate and death.

She ceased, stepped down from the platform, moved over to one of the great bronze lamps, and stood, holding its massive pillar in one slender hand, the other, with the manuscript in it, pressed to her bosom, her eyes wide with emotion and listening, waiting terror.

Merciful God! what was that cry outside, mingling with the shriek of the wind? The scream of a cat? The single German word, thrice repeated, that ended the song—"Come! come! come!"? Oh, horror beyond words to paint! that was it—the voice of a brute become articulate. Then the crash of glass, as the thin center of the oriel-window gave way under the impact of a heavy body, and the great cat hurled itself at the white throat of the woman I loved. She gave one agonized cry as the beast struck her, and reeled backward, dragging over as she fell the huge lamp that crushed out her sweet life. The cat had enough vitality left to bite me savagely as I tore it from her and killed it. My love died in my arms, and, though she could not speak, I know that she is still all mine, and that I shall have her soon; for they tell me I am dying from blood-poisoning from the bite. Well, let them think that if they choose, and that may be in part the cause, but a man may not live loving the dead as I love her.

They gave me the music and the words, and I burnt them both.

And now, before you call the nurse, give me my dear old violin and hold me up, for love is stronger than death and my sweet can hear me when I play.





*Drawn by John Barrymore.*

"FROM THE SMALLER ORGAN RAVED UP A PANDEMONIUM OF . . . GHOULISH  
EXECRATIONS."

(See "The Canonic Curse," page 515.)





AT the request of my friend, Bruce Carrington, Jr., and the lady soon to become his wife, I herewith unreservedly give to the public the detailed account of their recent amazing and horrible experience. The sensational guesses and wildly distorted half-truths appearing unceasingly in certain New York yellow journals have made this course a bitter necessity. As to the matter contained in the narrative—and the plain baldness of my style should make it sufficiently evident that whatever of the “flesh-creeping” enters into it, enters only because I have been unable to exclude it—I own as I set it down that I find myself ready to doubt my own sanity. That the “devil-bought” soul of a Flemish kapellmeister should be able to reach out from the Middle Ages and set a dead hand upon a Harvard graduate in the first year of the twentieth century is, I confess, something wholly impossible and incredible. Indeed, only the fact that for years I have known Carrington for one of the most cool-headed and least credulous of young New Yorkers could induce me to have anything to do with his story at all.

#### I.

From the time his organ studies introduced him to it, Carrington had made medieval music his hobby. Throughout his law course at Harvard he was constantly ransacking both the college and

the Boston library for everything bearing upon the subject; and every bar written by the old monkish composers seemed to have an irresistible fascination for him. In fact, when he graduated and entered the office of his father's firm, it is probable that he was more familiar with canons and fugues, counterpoint and Gregorian chants than he was with Coke and Blackstone. And that summer of 1901 he had definitely made up his mind to spend his holidays among the famous musical libraries of Belgium and Northern Italy, when a letter from his chum Keppel suddenly turned his eyes from the Continent and sent him to Canada instead. Keppel was working up his “Ph.D.” in the great Parisian library, the Bibliothèque Internationale, and the postscript of the letter read:—

“By the way, old man, if you're still as big an old-music crank as ever, something I came on the other day ought to interest you mightily. It seems that when Louis XIV. took Liege in 1659 and rifled the abbey, he sent the whole choir library over to his Sulpician favorites in Quebec, and there's nothing to show that it was ever returned. Is any such collection known to you? If not, why don't you go and look it up?”

It certainly was *not* known to Carrington, nor in his knowledge to any other “old-music crank.” It was the beginning of the June hot spell; the law business was dead, and the Carrington mansion on Madison Avenue a seven-times heated furnace.

NOTE—One does not often find a story which seems to come in the classification of Edgar Allan Poe's best work. Yet one might be tempted to risk the asking of such a place for “The Canonic Curse.” —EDITOR.



On the following Monday the young fellow was off for Canada.

From the beginning the Sulpician fathers were kindness itself. "They were most highly honored that M. Carrington should have come all the way from New York to see their library. They believed it did contain a large number of old musical manuscripts, though they had never done anything toward sorting and arranging them. But, most unfortunately, their father superior was just at that time on a visit to their brethren in Montreal, and—they regretted it exceedingly—they could not admit him to their library without his authority. He might return almost any day. Could not M. Carrington wait? And if he could, would he not help himself to pass the time by making use of their organs? In the outside chapel attached to their foundation they had two which the musicians of the city had been pleased to praise not a little. Until the father superior should return, M. Carrington must look upon them as his own."

He accepted their kindly and novel hospitality as freely as it was proffered, and for the next few days he was in and out of the little chapel again and again. The big oriel organ was a revelation of swelling strength and billowy harmonies. And the smaller one, perched high in the loft opposite, made up in sweetness what it lacked in power. The young New Yorker and Father Laurence, the Sulpician organist, were soon the best of friends. Often in the afternoon when vespers were over the latter would take the larger instrument, and Carrington the other, and for a long hour they would play in unison, or in a kind of antiphonal, musical conversation.

Thus it was that when, one evening, Carrington entered the chapel and found the big organ rolling its melodious tide through the dusky aisles, he slipped quietly upstairs in the darkness, and joined him on the smaller instrument. He had never heard the father play so brilliantly before. In turn they set variations on each other's themes, and then as challengingly improvised on each other's variations; and every moment Carrington found it harder to follow the flying fingers of the old Sulpician. At last, outmastered royally, he struck a wailing discord of unconditional surrender,

and stopped playing. From the obscurity of the other loft he was answered by a startled shriek of mingled fright and amusement. He ran wonderingly downstairs. His antiphonist descended in a panic. Even in the chapel gloom she was a vision of soft and radiant beauty.

With one voice they broke into the same explanation: each had mistaken the other for Father Laurence. She, too, together with three or four other musicians of the city, enjoyed the freedom of the organs. She, too, had often played against the skill of the reverend organist! They both went into a common burst of badly smothered laughter, though all the time the girl was biting her lips in an attempt to sober herself to a proper decorum.

When they turned a minute later they found Father Laurence himself standing in the doorway behind them; and, if anything, he was enjoying the situation more than either of them. But he came hastily to the rescue and introduced them. "Mlle. La Shelle, permit me to present M. Carrington, a famous musical scholar of New York. Monsieur, mademoiselle is the daughter of our neighbor, Colonel La Shelle, who, though he is not of our faith, is our very dear friend. The Colonel is, like yourself, an American, a distinguished engineer of New Orleans. But for five years now the harbor work he is doing for us has made him our fellow-citizen, and we could well wish to keep him forever." He pointed over the greensward. "Between his mansion and our chapel there is, as you see, neither hedge nor wall, and mademoiselle honors us by permitting our brotherhood to provide her with a second music-room!"

They chatted with the smiling father for a few minutes longer; then, with Miss La Shelle's permission, Carrington walked with her across the lawn to the lamp-lit corner of her father's long French veranda.

## II.

When, an hour afterward, the young fellow took his leave the world was changed for him. If ever a man had recognized the "one woman" at the first meeting of the eyes, it was true of him. And with the girl, too, the feeling was no less intense and overwhelming. It seemed to



them that somehow they had known each other from the beginning of things. When they parted they gazed into each other's eyes in a kind of mutual wonderment. And that night Carrington dreamed that they were again in the chapel organ-lofts building up together a world of glorious harmonies. And when Eloise La Shelle awakened all space and time was antiphonal of the young New Yorker.

There were, too, happily enough, bonds between Carrington and the old Colonel. For not only did they smoke the same tobacco, but the old gentleman's hobby, applied psychology—especially that strange gate of the science which opens upon spiritism, mental telepathy, occultism, and the like—had been something which, in his Harvard course, had taken a grip of Carrington only less strong than the fascination of his old music. When he called again on the following evening the two men talked on the cool veranda for hours after the girl had left them, and they parted with the frank hand-grasp of sudden but thorough comradeship. It made the position of the lovers almost idyllic. Carrington called again the next day and the next. And when at the end of the week the forgotten father superior returned, and a notification that the young fellow's request for the freedom of the library had been granted suddenly recalled him to his original business in Quebec, he was filled with the most melancholy regret that the worthy father could not have prolonged his stay in Montreal for the remainder of the year.

But he had not been fifteen minutes in the low-roofed north wing of the old monastery library before he changed his mind. If the hours away from Eloise La Shelle could be anywhere endurable it would be in that treasure-house to which he had now the key. Any other collection in America was the merest pigeonhole of parchment beside it. There was shelf on shelf weighed down with ponderous volumes, twice the size of any modern quarto, pricelessly bound in stamped and gilded leather, ribbed and bossed, escutcheoned and brass-clamped. And when Carrington opened them their gorgeously illuminated title pages almost kept him from going further into their wealth of fugues and masses, canons,

chants and counterpoint. As for the smaller volumes and unbound manuscripts, they were piled together, thick with dust, in hundreds. Morning after morning the young man ran his eyes along the uncouth, red-lined staves with their huge, square black notes, and turned over the yellow pages, dog-eared and finger-marked four hundred years ago. And, by the kind leave of the superior, almost every afternoon he brought a new armful of his treasure-trove to try over, often with Miss La Shelle beside him, on one of the chapel organs.

On Friday of that week he came upon a manuscript which drew his attention in a moment. It had been folded and doubled on itself, wrapped in parchment somewhat heavier than the common sort, and curiously bound with thongs like many knotted bowstrings. On the back of it was seared a rude but unmistakable devil's head, and the whole was sealed with the huge wafer of the prince-bishop of Liege. The father superior was once more generous and Carrington was given permission to open it. He carried it out into the chapel to Eloise, cut one of the thongs, slit the end of the parchment wrapper, and drew it forth.

It was a canon, one of that ingenious kind which the old monkish composers termed *per tonos* on account of their manner of modulating to the key of the note above, with each repetition rising gradually in a sort of frenzy until the circuit of keys is completed. And it was evident at a glance that it was not ordinary music. "Try it," said the young fellow.

The girl hesitated.

"I believe somebody's afraid of that horrid Satan's head."

She laughed, though not in a way that concealed her uneasy aversion, and began to play. She had not finished the first phrase before she stopped with a little shiver. "You'll say it's my nerves, but really there *is* something uncanny about it. It acts on me like a ghost story. Do put the thing back and get something else."

Carrington chuckled delightedly, and took her place before it at the organ. The composition seemed to be a kind of blasphemy in music! It had all the stateliness of the mass, yet behind that lurked a burden strangely sardonic and sacrilegious. It might well have been written



under the influence of some soul-depraving drug. And, what was incredible, if it had been, the baleful power which gave it birth still hung about it! Carrington might laugh crazily, and play on, but he could feel a cold sweat gathering on his forehead. A thick tent and curtain of oppression seemed slowly to draw in about him. Miss La Shelle's troubled protests came to him thin and far on the other side of it. And when at last he had finished the canon, and once more looked up, it struck him as strange that if she had been all the time so close to him she had not touched him! But other than to acknowledge that the music had affected him as it had affected her he said nothing, and in irritation at his own weakness tried to put the matter aside.

### III.

Carrington took dinner with the La Shelles that evening. Eloise had been nervously telling her father of their eerie experience of the afternoon, and the old student of applied psychology was still chuckling hugely over it when the young man was announced. "Well, sir," he said bluffly, "I guess there's a pretty straight case of hypnotic suggestion against you. It evidently acted first through the visual image—I refer to the devil's head; then through the auditory image, for I suppose a musician can find anything in music he's looking for, and, more than all, you were affected through the fear-sensations already in the mind of another. I refer finally to the spook-hunting little goose opposite me. You are probably of an extremely nervous, and what the hypnotists call susceptible, temperament, sir!"

Carrington shook his head in smiling but decided negation. "No, Colonel, no. I'm afraid I can't support you in that at all. When a youngster I was a confirmed sleep-walker, and on one occasion, being violently awakened, was given a shock which brought on brain-fever; indeed, I own that the specialists in charge warned my people that any repetition of such a shock might easily prove fatal. But you could hardly cite that as a fair or normal instance. And since then I have had absolutely no experience which would not go as evidence that I am of an extremely phlegmatic and unsus-

ceptible temperament. I can read all the ghost stories in the calendar without turning a hair. I have attended spiritualistic séances a dozen times, and invariably came away disappointed and contemptuous. And I have been the only one of twenty Harvard freshmen to completely resist the power of a famous mesmerist."

The Colonel bit his mustache. "Yet you say that you did actually experience certain sensations of the uncanny while playing this—this banshee music?"

"Yes," said Carrington doggedly, "I did!"

"And you deny my hypothesis of hypnotic suggestion?"

"I'm afraid I must."

"Very well!" and the old gentleman set his finger-tips hard together. "Then isn't it possible, now, for us to go straight ahead and put this thing to the proof? Considering that I am as wholly skeptical of all musical 'haunts' as this girl of mine here seems to be credulous of them, if I were to go over with you to that organ loft, and stand beside you while you played that canon, and you were then, under those altered conditions, to find yourself experiencing no peculiar or uncanny sensations whatever, would that change your opinion, sir?"

Carrington laughed. "It certainly would!"

Eloise was alarmed in a moment. "Now, father, you're not——"

"Yes, indeed, now, daughter, but I just am! When vespers are over, if Mr. Carrington is willing to try it, you may accompany us and see how in a ten-minute experiment a little modern science may shed a vast deal of new light on the ghostly and supernatural."

### IV.

An hour later they were all three crossing the lawn through the dusk. The empty chapel was in darkness. The girl stopped at the door. "Father, Mr. Carrington, I know how silly I must seem to you, but why could you not leave this experiment till to-morrow? You would at least have the daylight then."

Her lover hesitated irresolutely, but the Colonel laughed bluntly and ordered him forward. "Eloise," he said, "I give you up. You're no daughter of mine. We



shall go on without you." He pushed Carrington ahead. They groped their way up the stairs to the smaller instrument. The young fellow lit the organ tapers, drew the devil's-head canon from the back of one of the old-fashioned carved music-racks and began to play. The old man stood beside him, leaning on the loft railing; by the uncertain light of the candles he was watching his face with the eyes of a nerve specialist. To the music itself he had no thought of giving any heed whatever.

But he did give heed to it. Something in the first bars went to his brain like a swift, monstrous and malignant anæsthetic. Startled into an astounded resistance he clenched his hands upon the rail behind him and gazed steadfastly at one of the candle flames. It grew smaller and smaller. The black darkness closed and intensified about it like a burning pain, and suddenly it seemed to the Colonel that the flame was his own soul. He tore his eyes from it, and fastened them upon the face of the young man. His lips were lifted in a grin of fear and horror. His hands played on as if he had no longer had any power over them, as if his wrists had been grasped by some infernal gymnotus, some frightfully compelling current from the pit. And as the candle flames contracted to glimmering pin-points, the lines of his head and shoulders were picked out in a bluish, prickling "witch-fire," in the phosphorescence of a hellish halo.

The old man's soul filled with the terrible feeling that his reason, his identity, his life were slowly going from him. The satanic music seemed to be coming at him from utter darkness. In a desperation of terror he fought against it. He could still get the sensation of his fingers galvanically closing and unclosing upon the railing. He writhed and put forth his strength like another Laocoon. He once more got his eyes open. Carrington's face shone out a white knot of terror and agony. He was still chained to his bench of torture. The music mocked and triumphed over them, mercilessly, infuriately. Heart and brain seemed pressed together by the weight of millions of tons. Upon the old man's ears burst the thunderous clangor of a thousand great discordant bells. The candle flames

were now huge as the lanterns of light-houses; then, swiftly and frightfully, they began to fall away till they were no larger than two blind and staring eyes. The music was fast approaching its outrageous end. The candles shrank and cowered lower and lower, and with the last horrible note went out. Shriek on shriek burst from Carrington's bloodless lips. The old man dropped fainting beside him.

The hysterical screams of the girl at the chapel door brought a hurrying company of gray-robed Sulpicians. When they were able partly to comprehend her, trembling and crossing themselves, they climbed into the organ-loft, and bore down the senseless forms of the Colonel and the young man.

## V.

By the following day the Colonel and his daughter were almost themselves again. But Carrington, lying in the La Shelle guest chamber, passed from a state of coma into a raging delirium. His father was instantly summoned from New York, and for a week he and the wretched conscience-smitten Colonel watched in turn beside him. But all went well. The fever gradually burned itself out. And at the end of the third week the young fellow, though weak as a baby, was on his way to recovery. Eloise was with him almost more than the trained nurse, and before his father left them their engagement was formally announced.

The fortnight which followed was full of quiet but no less rapturous happiness for both of them. The girl tended him with a doting solicitude almost maternal. He was to eat just so much. He was to go to bed at such an hour. And she withheld his mail for days after the doctor had assured her that he might have it with perfect safety; but one hot August evening after dinner when he was sitting on the veranda in his invalid's dressing-gown, looking rather wistfully at the setting sun, she suddenly took pity on him, and brought forth the big, variegated bundle of doubly post-marked envelopes. If she could have guessed the contents of almost the first she opened for him he would never have seen it. It was from his chum Keppel, and he was still working in the great Paris library. Carrington had not read a dozen



lines before his face began to change. The letter ran as follows:—

"DEAR OLD MAN:—I don't know whether or not you took my tip about running up to Quebec on a hunt for that old music from Liege. Maybe you've been there already, and come back in disgust. But if you haven't, I've dug up something this last week which ought to send you up there by the next train. I can't give you more than a hint of the thing, though I've already found a good-sized volume of old Flemish chronicles, consistory reports and the like bearing upon the case.

"But it seems that in the early part of the fifteenth century in Flanders some of the kapellmeisters got to setting words to their religious compositions which were anything but sacred. And the matter finally grew to be such a scandal that the prince-bishop stepped in and forbade ten of the worst offenders ever again to touch an organ or to write another line of music of any sort whatsoever. Well, as it happened, one of them, Domenico by name, had a good deal of true music in him for all its dubious outward complexion, and he went on composing in secret. And, as sometimes happens, too, he began to do his finest work under the adverse conditions.

"But he could hope to hear it played only by passing it over to another. And when at last he could hold out no longer he took his successor into his confidence and delivered to him everything he had completed. That individual played it with all the willingness in the world. And he took all the credit for the compositions, too; indeed, I don't see how he could well have done anything else. At any rate while his glory began to go forth through the whole country this Domenico became more and more forgotten. And that seemed in the end to send the man almost out of his mind with rage and envy. He wound up one night by taking the medieval way out of it, and offered his soul to the devil for a chance to get even. Next morning his successor received from him a canon which had the pleasant little attribute of being able to hand out a sudden quietus to any one who should play it through three times, and, to clinch it, to any one, too, who should wittingly destroy it. Those things make

curious reading nowadays, don't they? However, the tradition finishes with most circumstantial gruesomeness. Two nights later the man was found dead before his organ, his face distorted as if from some fiendish torture. Domenico's hatred of him, if not the real cause of it, was generally known. He came under suspicion, was put on the rack, and confessed.

"The consistory condemned him to be broken on the wheel and flayed. And shortly before his execution they branded him over the heart with the 'devil's head.' To crown it all, after his death they used the skin from his breast to wrap his canon in, and tied it up with the sinews of his wrists. Then finally the bedeviled music was given the curse of the prince-bishop and laid away by itself in the choir library.

"Now, while you possibly may not feel inclined to accept the story in its entirety, there probably was among that Liege music a canon with some such tradition attached to it. And if there was it is not altogether unlikely that it is now in Quebec. At any rate, whether you give yourself any worry over your side of it or not, there's a regular second edition of the 'Faust Legend' in it for me."

Carrington looked long at the letter. The girl watched him with eyelids aquiver with anxiety. "What was done with that—that canon?" he asked at last. They had never spoken of it since that hour of never-to-be-forgotten horror in the chapel.

"Father has it in his safe," she answered trembling. "But you know you mustn't talk about that, dearest."

"Oh, it's all right now," he said. "It's only a matter—a matter of what the impossible thing might have done. I'd like to look at it again."

She was still refusing him when her father came out to them, and she left it to him. Carrington passed him over the letter.

He read it, let himself dazedly down into a chair, sat slowly licking his tongue about his lips, and then read it again. "But, good gracious, Carrington," he finally broke out, "this is America, and the year 1901! I have a telephone in my library. You can see the railroad station from the back of the garden. I can't—we're not—good heavens, sir!"

"Yes," said Carrington grimly, "it





*Drawn by William James Horlbut.*

"THE GIRL TENDED HIM WITH A DOTING SOLICITUDE."

certainly is hard to reconcile such a tale with modern science and enlightenment."

"But it's asking me to believe in—what is it they called it—diabology or satanophany? Why, the words themselves have been all but dead for a hundred years!" He wiped the perspiration from under his mop of gray hair.

The young man smiled and put the argument aside. "Well, I suppose we can safely look at the thing again, anyway."

In an instant Eloise was again entreating him, but her father overbore her. "Why, daughter, he's already had the excitement of reading the letter. To handle the music can add nothing to it." He strode into the library, unlocked his safe, and brought out the satanic canon. They examined it for several minutes without speaking.

The grisly thongs which bound it, and the hideous outer covering, a sort of softer and more open fibered parchment, had in them now a new and more horrid power of repulsion. But the music when unfolded looked forth vacantly and harmlessly.

"And it's so simple," muttered Carrington breathlessly. "I can't see where— There aren't twenty bars of theme in the

whole thing. It's only the repetitions in it that give it its length. I could play it now from memory without the slightest difficulty!"

"Oh, but dearest, you wouldn't, you surely——" Eloise had just laid down Keppel's letter. She was white to the lips and trembled violently. "I want you to swear to me that you'll never even let yourself think of the thing again, let alone play it!"

He looked at her with wan humor. "Well, I guess, dear, I needn't promise not to play it again, anyway. It seems to be a case of 'three strokes and out,' you know, and it came near enough to getting me the second time."

He slipt his hand over hers. The Colonel rose with the canon, and carried it back into the library. Left alone with her lover the frightened girl cuddled into his breast, and to coax his mind from the subject of her fears she began to talk of a thousand trifles about the house. Across the greensward there came to them the last soft strains of vespers. Far away the heat had called up a thunderstorm; its growlings were becoming every moment more



distinct. The girl ceased talking, and they sat long in silence. And when suddenly she realized that her weary-brained convalescent had let himself drop calmly off to sleep in her heart there was anything but reproach. She rose noiselessly, hung over him for a moment in blissful brooding and then tiptoed away to see that all was ready for him in his room.

## VI.

A few minutes later she returned. Carrington's chair was empty. She ran to the veranda steps and looked out. The heavy pall of thunder-clouds fast driving across the sky had brought down the darkness an hour before nightfall; but she could not mistake the figure passing uncertainly into the chapel door. He was walking in his sleep; that she divined, quaking. But whatever else was in her thought she dared not let the terror in her know. In an ague of shuddering she fled across the lawn, and stumbled weakly up the four stone steps. Carrington had already seated himself at the smaller organ. She started after him, then stopped. He had himself given full warning of what it would mean to awaken him in such a condition and in such surroundings while he was still weak from fever! And as she stood there, from the fingers of the somnambulist there came mockingly to her through the gloom the first demoniacal notes of the hell-born canon. . . .

For a long minute she was as if frozen in a thick ice of horror. Her heart stopped, her limbs were dead, her open lips and staring eyes were like those of a Medusa carved in stone. And when once more she felt that she could move, once more, instinctively, she started toward her lover. And once more she stopped, gasping. She could not. If he was to die, some other hand than hers must deal the blow. Her tortured thoughts flung themselves from side to side like creatures in a cage of fire. The devil-music leaped forward, faster and faster. Over them, as swiftly, the storm was closing. A long roll of thunder came in to the girl like the trumpet of the day of doom. She could hold herself motionless no longer.

With a choking cry she fled down the chapel. A flash of lightning lit her steps,

and in a kind of frenzy she flung herself up the stairs to the great oriel organ. Then—it was to drown the hideous voice of the Moloch music, it was with the wild unreasoned hope of somehow awakening Carrington unharmed, it was her woman-musician's soul fleeing to sanctuary and calling in despair for the help of the All-Powerful—her fingers struck the first mighty, heaven-born chords of one of the immortal choruses of the Messiah.

In an instant the swift and ruthless, horribly exultant, trampling march of the canon stopped dead. It was as if a crucifix had been raised amid the devil's mass, as if some skeleton-and-demon dance of death had been banned and halted. From the smaller organ raved up a pandemonium of fiendish snarlings, ghoulish execrations, haggish shriekings, and then the whole Gehenna gathered itself into one raging fury of resistance. All the challenged powers of darkness seemed to rush together and pour from the canon as from the pit's mouth. The chapel was a-surge with such a chaos of wild, atrocious malevolency as, it well might seem, nothing in earth or heaven could stand against.

The girl felt herself choking, swooning. But again her desperate love fought down her weakness, and her fingers pressed the keys in one final cry of agonized appeal. In that proud martyr's ecstasy strength flooded back to her. The great organ shook itself free once more, and, finding its full diapason, high above all that screaming devil defiance of revilings and blasphemies rolled on giant-mouthed in its tremendous exorcism.

Then it was as if that old Sulpician chantry had been that great Sistine chapel of Michael Angelo which is walled about with his stupendous configuration of the Last Judgment, and all the hosts of heaven and hell had sprung to warring life. And the thunderstorm gave to the battling organs an awful chorus and accompaniment. The lightning, falling about the chapel in an almost unbroken flash, struck through the ground-glass windows to right and left of the somnambulist, and leaped and rioted about his blind face in shuddering flickers of unearthly green. But through the great stained oriel which looked upon the girl the heavenly fires came in glowing bursts



of color and wrapped her in a mantle of hues divinely luminous. And the thunder with its dreadful fulminations seemed now like some colossally protecting friend. It was the voice of the legions she was invoking. Higher and higher pealed the trumpet-tongue of the great organ. The canon still gnashed its teeth like a thousand frenzied hell-hounds, but gradually its hideous exultation died away. Stronger and stronger came the great conquering chords of good; and then the mighty anthem rose to its tremendous apotheosis in that earth-awakening, heaven-soaring chorus of hallelujahs. . . .

The storm was passing. The canon's voice was now only a raucous paroxysm of frustrated rage. Into the baffled ranks of evil the chorus swept like some celestial soldiery. The girl felt herself inspired, and in her hands every Gabriel-note became a sword of flame to beat the vampire music from her lover's soul. . . . His fingers faltered on the keys. . . . In a last impotent falsetto the canon altogether ceased.

He was awakening. The girl called to him. He answered her. In his voice was amazement, but no note of brain-destroy-

ing terror, nor of demoniacal possession. The spell had been utterly broken! She fled through the darkness from her organ-loft to his, and gathered him to her bosom. Then white and trembling they hurried together from the chapel.

The La Shelle mansion was in an uproar.

The servants were running about in the rain, terrified. One of the last fierce thunderbolts had struck the cupola and torn its splintering course down into the library. Apparently the steel of the safe had drawn it, and indeed the whole charge of electric fluid seemed to have plunged itself into the open strong-box. Of the Colonel's papers nine-tenths were burned past all hope of recognition, and of the devil's head canon only the great seal of the prince-bishop remained.

The one man who a month ago could perhaps have furnished a duplicate of the manuscript has now only a rapidly-fading nightmare memory of it. Other than the statement he is preparing with the help of Colonel and Miss La Shelle for the secretary of the Society of Psychical Research, what is here written contains his final utterance upon the subject.

## THE BUILDERS.

BY G. W. VANDEGRIFT.

I HAVE watched the birds in springtime  
Building along the way;  
From their hearts a song of joyance  
Flooded the golden day.

I have watched men toiling, toiling,  
A silent, listless throng;  
In their hearts there dwelt no gladness,  
From their lips there fell no song.

We have wandered like truant children  
Deep into ways of strife;  
Let us build as the birds are building,  
Singing gladness into life.







## THE LADY AND THE GHOST.

BY ROSE CECIL O'NEILL.

*Illustrated by the author.*

**I**T was some moments before the Lady became rationally convinced that there was something occurring in the corner of the room, and then the actual nature of the thing was still far from clear.

"To put it as mildly as possible," she murmured, "the thing verges upon the uncanny;" and, leaning forward upon her silken knees, she attended upon the phenomenon.

At first it had seemed like some faint and unexplained atmospheric derangement, occasioned, apparently, neither by an opened window nor by a door. Some papers fluttered to the floor, the fringes of the hangings softly waved, and, indeed, it would still have been easy to dismiss the matter as the effect of a vagrant draft had not the state of things suddenly grown unmistakably unusual. All the air of the room, it then appeared, rushed even with violence to the point and there underwent what impressed her as an aerial convulsion, in the very midst and well-spring of which, so great was the confusion, there seemed to appear at intervals almost the semblance of a shape.

The silence of the room was disturbed by a book that flew open with fluttering leaves, the noise of a vase of violets blown over, from which the perfumed water dripped to the floor, and soft touchings all around, as of a breeze passing through a chamber full of trifles.

The ringlets of the Lady's hair were swept forward toward the corner upon

which her gaze was fixed, and in which the conditions had now grown so tense with imminent occurrence and so rent with some inconceivable throe that she involuntarily rose, and, stepping forward against the pressure of her petticoats which were blown about her ankles, she impatiently thrust her hand into the —

She was immediately aware that another hand had received it, though with a far from substantial envelopment, and for another moment what she saw before her trembled between something and nothing. Then from this precarious situation there slowly emerged into dubious view the shape of a young man dressed in evening clothes over which was flung a mantle of voluminous folds such as is worn by ghosts of fashion.

"The very deuce was in it!" he complained; "I thought I should never materialize."

She flung herself into her chair, confounded; yet, even in the shock of the emergency, true to herself, she did not fail to smooth her ruffled locks.

Her visitor had been scanning his person in a dissatisfied way, and with some vexation he now ejaculated: "Beg your pardon, my dear, but are my feet on the floor, or where in thunder are they?"

It was with a tone of reassurance that she confessed that his patent-leathers were the trivial matter of two or three inches from the rug. Whereupon, with still another effort, he brought himself down until





" 'PICTURE MY AGONY AT FINDING THAT YOU HAD FORGOTTEN.' "



his feet rested decently upon the floor. It was only when he walked about to examine the bric-à-brac that a suspicious lightness was discernible in his tread.

When he had composed himself by the survey, effecting it with an air of great insouciance, which, however, failed to conceal the fact that his heart was beating somewhat wildly, he approached the Lady.

"Well, here we are again, my love!" he cried, and devoured her hands with ghostly kisses. "It seems an eternity that I've been struggling back to you through the outer void and what-not. Sometimes, I

"Now, when all is done, and I lie so low,  
I cannot sleep for this, my only care;  
For thought of that dim place I could not know;  
That where my heart was laid I did not go,  
Nor saw you musing there!"

"Well, well, these things irk a ghost so. Naturally, as soon as possible I made my way back—to be satisfied—to be satisfied that you were still mine." He bent a piercing look upon her.

"I observe by the calendar on your writing-table that some years have elapsed since my—um—since I expired," he added, with a faint blush. It appears that the



"IN AN INSTANT HE HAD HER IN HIS ARMS..."

confess, I all but despaired. Life is not, I assure you, all beer and skittles for the disembodied."

He drew a long breath, and his gaze upon her and the entire chamber seemed to envelop all and cherish it.

"Little room, little room! And so you are thus! Do you know," he continued, with vivacity, "I have wondered about it in the grave, and I could hardly sleep for this place unpenetrated. Heigho! What a lot of things we leave undone! I dashed this off at the time, the literary passion strong in me, thus:—

matter of their dissolution is, in conversation, rather kept in the background by well-bred ghosts.

"Heigho! How time does fly! You'll be joining me soon, my dear."

She drew herself splendidly up, and he was aware of her beauty in the full of its tenacious excellence—of the delicate insolence of Life looking upon Death—of the fact that *she had forgotten him*.

He rose, and confronted this, his trembling hands thrust into his pockets, then turned away to hide the dismay of his countenance. He was, however, a spook





"OH, DO NOT LEAVE ME," SHE CRIED, "OR MY LOVE WILL KILL ME!"

of considerable spirit, and in a jiffy he met the occasion. To her blank, indignant gaze he drew a card from his case, and, taking a pencil from the secretary, wrote beneath the name:—

"Quiet to the breast,  
Wheresoe'er it be,  
That gave an hour's rest  
To the heart of me.  
Quiet to the breast  
Till it lieth dead,  
And the heart be clay  
Where I visited.  
Quiet to the breast,  
Though forgetting quite  
The guest it sheltered once;  
To the heart, good night!"

Handing her the card he bowed, and, through force of habit, turned to the door, forgetting that his ghostly pressure would not turn the knob.

As the door did not open, with a sigh of recollection for his spiritual condition, he prepared to disappear, casting one last look at the faithless Lady. She was still looking at the card in her hand, and the tears ran down her face.

"She has remembered," he reflected; "how courteous!" For a moment it

seemed he could contain his disappointment, discreetly removing himself now at what he felt was the vanishing-point, with the customary reticence of the dead, but feeling overcame him. In an instant he had her in his arms, and was pouring out his love, his reproaches, the story of his longing, his doubts, his discontent and his desperate journey back to earth for a sight of her. "And, ah!" cried he, "picture my agony at finding that you had forgotten. And yet I surmised it in the gloom. I divined it by my restlessness and my despair. Perhaps some lines that occurred to me will suggest the thing to you—you recall my old knack for versification?"

"Where the grasses weep  
O'er his darkling bed,  
And the glow-worms creep,  
Lies the weary head  
Of one laid deep, who cannot sleep:  
The unremembered dead."

He took a chair beside her, and spoke of their old love for each other, of his fealty through all transmutations; incidentally, of her beauty, of her cruelty, of the light of her face which had illumined his darksome way to her—and of a lot of



other things—and the Lady bowed her head, and wept.

The hours of the night passed thus; the moon waned, and a pallor began to tinge the dusky cheek of the east, but the eloquence of the visitor still flowed on, and the Lady had his misty hands clasped to her reawakened bosom. At last a suspicion of rosiness touched the curtain. He abruptly rose.

"I cannot hold out against the morning," he said; "it is time all good ghosts were in bed."

But she threw herself on her knees before him, clasping his ethereal waist with a despairing embrace.

"Oh, do not leave me," she cried, "or my love will kill me!"

He bent eagerly above her. "Say it again—convince me!"

"I love you," she cried, again and again and again, with such an anguish of sincerity as would convince the most skeptical spook that ever revisited the glimpses of the moon.

"You will forget again," he said.

"I shall never forget!" she cried. "My life will henceforth be one continual remembrance of you, one long act of devotion to your memory, one oblation, one unceasing penitence, one agony of waiting!"

He lifted her face, and saw that it was true.

"Well," said he, gracefully wrapping his cloak about him, "well, now I shall have a little peace."

He kissed her, with a certain jaunty grace, upon her hair, and prepared to dissolve, while he lightly tapped a tattoo upon his leg with the dove-colored gloves he carried.

"Good-by, my dear!" he said; "henceforth I shall sleep o' nights; my heart is quite at rest."

"But mine is breaking," she wailed, madly trying once more to clasp his vanishing form.

He threw her a kiss from his misty finger-tips, and all that remained with her, besides her broken heart, was a faint disturbance of the air.



## AT THE GOAL.

BY ELSA BARKER.

OH, but Fate plays us many a sorry jest!  
 Dry dust and ashes crown our fondest quest,  
 And when at last Love comes to comfort us—  
 The one we love not always loves us best!





## Dr. Cox's Discovery.

By Herbert A. Ward.

**L**AST July I boarded the stanch steamer "Boston" for Yarmouth. There was the usual medley of cooks and waitresses returning from a two weeks' vacation, and of tourists eager for a taste of foreign soil at the cheapest rates. For the most part the faces were common and uninteresting; so, when we passed Boston Light, I fled a group of howling children, whom the swell, I hoped, would soon silence, and, choosing a seat above the screw, fell to reading a most fascinating account of Doctor Broca's discovery of the serum of intoxication.

Like so many other physicians of the modern school, I am an enthusiast over the many microbe theories that tumble over each other in the order of their discovery. What will not the bacillus be responsible for next? Absorbed in the resistless fascination of this speculation, I raised my eyes from my pamphlet, and looked straight into those of a man not ten feet away.

His was a most remarkable face; it conveyed the immediate impression of intolerable anguish. His eyes were sunken, burning with unquenchable intelligence; they looked as if they were vainly seeking compassion, and had lost all hope; the high forehead seemed glazed, as if covered with stretched parchment; his cheeks were hectic and hollowed; the beard, wandering of its

own free will, showed the mouth, whose passionate form and sensitive outline, embittered at the corners, indicated a noble character that had been blasted by some extraneous fatality, or by perjured love. The man might have been thirty, but looked fully fifty. His seemed an age of ambition undone, of plans miscarried, and of future disrupted.

For fully two hours we sat there side by side without speaking. I had now ceased speculating upon Doctor Broca's serum, and was filled with curiosity regarding my vis-à-vis. At last, unable to stand the tension any longer, I handed him the pamphlet, and said: "If you are interested in medical discoveries, you will find this of momentous importance to society, if what he claims can be proven."

The stranger's eyes lighted with recognition as he glanced at the title. "Ah, Doctor Broca!" he exclaimed. "I knew him well. I worked with him and Pasteur and Koch before I went to Vienna. I am Doctor Cox."

Through the lobes of my brain there flitted a reverberation of that name. It was associated with the reports of foreign medical journals, and with some remarkable experiments. Indeed, there flashed upon me the association of the name with a discovery that was to revolutionize humanity, and which would be given out at some future time. So I greeted the stranger with that effusion which mediocrity pours upon genius, and gave him my unknown name.

I had never studied abroad, and knew nothing of the incandescent lights—those saviors of humanity—except by reports.



Doctor Cox greeted his brother physician with as much cordiality as his reserve could command. Evidently he was pleased not to be alone upon the ship.

"You look as if you had overworked," I said, introductorily.

"No," he answered, with pathetic weariness, "I have not overworked, I have overdone." This distinctive phrase did not detract from the mystery that surrounded the man. We talked for an hour or two before the gong sounded. His deep eyes glowed as he retailed with intimate knowledge the history of Pasteur's and Koch's wonderful experiments. And, as he forgot his own misery, his youth came back before my eyes just as some desiccated plants are suddenly resurrected by a few drops of water.

"Doctor!" I ejaculated, as the last vibration of the gong passed by. "You are suffering from some terrible calamity; you have given up your future, and it is killing you. Anyone with the blindest eyes to symptoms can see that. I wish you cared to confide in me." I felt more like a girl than a man in my impulse, and breathed rapidly. I could distinctly feel my blood accelerating, and expected nothing less than a curt reply, if not an immediate withdrawal.

But Doctor Cox looked at me long and searchingly, until my eyes became blurred, and I could no longer distinguish his features. Then he said, kindly: "Thank you for your interest. After supper, when the rest have retired, and the moon is well up, I will tell you my story, and you can judge whether you can be of assistance to me or not." With that he bowed and left. I cannot now account for my friendly aggression, or for his flood of confidence to a stranger, except for the mysterious fact that natures change upon the high seas.

With what impatience did I await the night! Food was impossible; but time, that flies too fast for the condemned, at last accommodated the waiting. With an ill-assumed air of indifference, I strolled to the stern. Doctor Cox was sitting smoking impetuously. Without a word of greeting, and with startling abruptness, he began his story.

The churn of the tireless screw, the velvet line of smoke, the sheen of the moon

upon our quarter, the quiet sea whose horizon was veiled by a tenuous mist: these are my only memories in connection with the marvelous tale which I was permitted to hear.

"I will not burden you," he said, "with the story of my whole life. I will simply say that I am a graduate of Harvard College and Medical School. Ten days after I got my diploma, authorizing me to kill or cure under the law, my father died, leaving me an income that made me independent. In a month I was in Paris, and devoted my nights as well as days to investigation and experiment. I became familiar with the Pasteur School and all that it aimed to accomplish. In the same way I spent two years as Doctor Koch's assistant in his laboratory in Berlin.

"Feeling the need of hospital practise to supplement my laboratory experiments, I went to Vienna, that Mecca of all physicians. In less than a month I met Elsa. Elsa was the most superb woman I had ever seen. She was a perfect type of blonde. She had all the stateliness of a Margaret, all the piquancy of a Lili, and all the seductiveness of an Undine. She was tall and svelte. Her eyes were star sapphires, and her lips bows of roses. At one moment she could be stately as a princess, at another clinging as a bride. Capricious as the Mediterranean, yet steadfast as the Gulf Stream, she was a woman to be won by hurricane and calm, by volcano and by ice. I became immediately infatuated with her, and was soon on intimate terms with her mother.

"Madame Von Krakenburg was the widow of an Austrian captain of noble blood, and lived a proud life of genteel poverty, which she fancied she hid from all her friends. The only one she deceived was herself.

"In a natural way it came about that I soon hired the whole of her top floor, and so became an inmate of that delightful household. This household consisted only of Elsa, her mother, and an aged Newfoundland dog, called Max. This dog had a strange habit that had grown upon him like the mange, a hatred of Elsa's mother; at the time of my entrance into the family this had become a mania. This extraordinary aversion was undoubtedly due to



senility. Devoted to Elsa, Max would growl asthmatically, and show his toothless gums whenever the mistress of the house came into the room. The dog never allowed Elsa to be touched by anyone but me without fierce demonstrations of resentment. I had been provident enough to bribe him the first day I called with sugar pellets.

"One morning I received a summons to go to the hospital to see a patient who had just been brought in. I arrived in time to find a man dying of old age. A careful diagnosis showed that he had absolutely no disorder or ailment. For years I had been looking for just such a case, for I had developed a theory that age was nothing but a disease caused by the ravages of a bacillus which had never yet been seen. Up to this time I had never found a case whose fatality did not result from either disease or accident; but before me lay a man perfect in all his functions, yet so old that his years had long since passed the century-mark. Feebleness without senility, death without impairment of functions—the suspension of the breath of life without a visible cause—here was the opportunity for my years of training. It was the unique case that might solve the insoluble problem. That night the life of the man flickered out while I held him in my arms; and in a moment I was absorbed over specimens of his blood that I had wrung from his reluctant veins. Fancy the feeling of the man who after superhuman efforts discovers the North Pole, or who has lived to see an almost impious theory accepted as a law of the universe! With eyes glued to the microscope, that night I understood for the first time the saying that a day is as a thousand years unto the Lord. In the viscid fluid before me floated the microbe of old age, and in my hands lay the secret of eternal life!

"I must have lost my head; for, when I came to, I found myself in the wintry night, running like a madman home in order to perpetuate in my own laboratory that precious colony of immortal germs. It was icy, and in crossing a street I slipped and fell. At that fatal moment a dozen sleighs darted by on the return from some cursed revel. Ah, if they had only known how they trampled on eternal life! We commit the

unpardonable sin in blindness, and giggle and chatter, while Azrael points his shining sword at us, prophetic of our doom.

"When I arose, dazed with the momentous misfortune, the hurricane of hoofs had passed, sweeping with it my slides and specimens—hostages to humanity of undying youth—that had been flung from my hands when I fell. In vain I groped and searched; the discovery had passed me by, illuminating my soul for a brief moment like a blinding flash of lightning, leaving me in greater darkness than before.

"For two months I lay delirious. Elsa and her mother watched over me. During my convalescence, the manner of the mother puzzled and troubled me. She was a splendid woman of about forty-five, in the prime of her vigor, and at times of excitement not looking much older than her daughter. She must have been beautiful in her youth, and indeed I had heard from General Van Fersen that the court of the Emperor held no fairer maid of honor when she was eighteen.

"It was at the time of my greatest depression and perplexity that Elsa told me that the old elephant in the Zoo had died that morning. In an instant I was well. The microbe that I had once held and lost might be found again. Elephants are well known to live to a marvelous age. Fortune, whose daughter I had, alas! kissed, was restoring to me her fitful favors.

"'I must hurry,' I said. 'Have the stove in my laboratory heated.' I must see that elephant."

"'You will take care of yourself?' Madame Von Krakenburg put her hand imploringly upon my arm. But Elsa only pouted. With a hurried assent I jumped into the drosky, and was gone.

"My disappointment only whetted my ambition. Somewhere in the world my great discovery was beckoning me. Somewhere the limit of existence was reached, and at that limit would be found the microbe of old age. I got in the habit of calling it 'my macrobiote.'

"'Madame,' I said one day after supper, 'I am going to leave you for a few months, or even for a year or more. I have a mission to perform for humanity. I have made a great discovery. It must be verified. It may take much or little time; in



the meanwhile I wish to keep my rooms intact. If I return successful I shall be hailed as the greatest benefactor the world has ever seen—next, of course,' I said, reverently, 'to the historic Savior. In that case I shall ask you for the hand of your daughter Elsa.'

"Madame Von Krakenburg became very pale, but Elsa looked me straight in the eyes.

"'Mama,' Elsa said, after a long pause, 'I shall marry Carl, and no one else.' She arose, with royal dignity, and held out to me her hand, and I kissed it.

"They accepted my high claims and the necessity for my departure with a beautiful faith, and made suitable preparation.

"The next morning I read an account of a large whale which had been captured alive on the shores of the Baltic. My opportunity called me. I hastily packed in a special case all the apparatus for making and preserving cultures. It seemed as if Elsa's arms could not be untwined from my neck, and that my eyes were fascinated by her beautiful face; but later, when I bade Madame Von Krakenburg adieu, it seemed as if her lips had lost the power of detachment. What did that passionate kiss mean to her? What would it mean to me? Thrilled, but troubled, without another look at my weeping fiancée, I tore myself away, and rushed into the street.

"I need not detail my search for the oldest life the world had in existence. Birds, beasts and reptiles passed under my microscopic gaze. Impatience and disappointment were the travail of my mind, and what hope was left was rapidly dispelled through travail of the body. The carp, the turtle, the snake, the whale, the elephant, the cockatoo—in short, any animal supposed to live longer than the time allotted to average life, underwent a vigorous scrutiny. You know as well as I do that old age comes to animals as well as to man without a feeling of desire to be old. It is therefore abnormal, and it must be a disease. We all fight it. At last, overcome, we accept it with resignation. It occurred to me that this unconscious or even sentient antagonism to old age might be a means itself for hastening its advent, for it is a universal law that what we dread we invite. Every now and then there occurs a rare

case where old age comes with a desire for it. Such a clod of a man ought to live forever, for to him there is no waste of the brain and body tissue. The one I found in the hospital may only exist once in a century. I therefore decided to give up animals, and continue my search in plants. They have a circulation of the vital fluid, and may attain an extraordinary age. It has been stated by the greatest botanist that they have morality as well as sagacity. What is an elephant of a hundred years to a tree of a thousand?

"The decision made, I hurried to the Island of Kos, and to its little capital, for there is supposed to exist the oldest tree in the world. It was especially fitting that I should give this historic and guarded monument of ancient civilization a careful inspection, for it is undisputed that under its shade over two thousand years ago Hippocrates wrought his healing arts, and that four hundred years before, Æsculapius, his ancestor, the father of human medicine, beneath its limbs cured the superstitious of their diseases. Supported by columns of masonry, surrounded by a fountain, and railed from the populace, this most ancient living relic challenged the modern discoverer. Did the bacillus of old age course sluggishly in its atrophied veins? Had this wonderful tree stored in its heart the lore of the ancients? And would it yield up the secrets of eternal life to a disciple of Pasteur?

"This memorial relic of Grecian paganism is probably the most pathetic example of old age in the world. Its enormous trunk is only a hollow shell, and from its scaly bark only a few green shoots struggle for a starved existence. To gather one or two of these became literally the object of my future life. In vain I tried to bribe the zealous guards. No money could accomplish my purpose, for the tree had been worshiped by the simple inhabitants for many centuries; besides, it was the source of the island's greatest income.

"I soon found myself an object of suspicion, and dogged with a persistence that characterizes the bigotry of the Levant. Fortunately, at the critical moment of failure and despair, an Englishman, whom I had met pleasantly in Paris, sailed in on his yacht. I explained that I needed a few



twigs of that almost dead descendant of an unknown age for museum purposes, and told him how matters stood.

"Nothing pleases an Englishman more than a spice of adventure in which the superstitions of an inferior race are trampled upon. A few nights later, in a hurricane of wind and rain, a small party of us landed, and made for the sacred tree. The frightened guard was gagged and bound, ladders were hastily unlimbered, and in a few minutes the priceless twigs, oldest known specimens of living growth, were concealed in my breast-pocket. The next morning before sunrise we were in the open ocean, with only purple spots on the distant horizon.

"But all night long my eyes were glued to the microscope, searching in vain for that microbe of old age which I had once held in my possession, and which now seemed to have eluded me forever.

"In three months, after I had eliminated all the possibilities of Europe, I was encamped amid the giant redwood-trees of California; for, after all, it was forced upon

my reluctant imagination that the United States not only held the tombs of the most ancient civilizations the world knows of to-day but it also possesses within its fastnesses inorganic life that antedates the Montezumas, the Incas, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Cliff-dwellers, and even the Mayas—that mysterious race, contemporary

with the inhabitants of submerged Atlantis, and cousins to the shepherd kings, who antedated the ancient monarchs of Egypt by many thousands of years.

"I stood, surrounded by the gigantic sequoias, and seemed to be transported into that antediluvian age when ferns scraped the sky, and when dragons were not myths but were fearful realities. It did not take me long to run to earth, or rather to air, the oldest group of this strange species that have been

appropriately called 'sempervirens.' At Felton, near Santa Cruz, I soon found myself in a mystical circle of sequoias, more ancient than the Stonehenge, and whose birth perhaps antedated the sacred tree of Kos. The redwood is the natural receptacle of germs and microbes,



*Drawn by George T. Tobin.*

"'COME!' I CRIED, 'IN THE NAME OF GOD ALMIGHTY, ONE DROP OF BLOOD!'"



for, like the fauna of arid zones, its veins contain much water and no resin. Pierce its cells, and it bleeds like an ox at the sacrifice. With infinite pains I selected the oldest of this prehistoric group. There it stood, pointing straight to heaven. Its base was over a hundred and twenty feet in circumference, while its huge fronds swept the pure air hundreds of feet above me.

"I had hardly pitched my tent at the base of this eternal monument, wondering what strange history it had witnessed and had disdained to record during its thousands of years of life, when a party of scientists rode up for purposes of investigation. These confounded college expeditions headed by the inevitable professor! How did I know that under the disguise of a blessing they were about to bring upon me a life's curse? How ignorantly and how buoyantly we walk into the traps that Fate is ready to spring upon us!

"That evening I drew the ichor from the sequoia's veins. It flowed elastically, nay, too eagerly. It lacked the inertia natural to senility. It dawned upon me, even before I prepared the fateful slide, that perhaps the gigantic specimen, born before Abraham was conceived, had not yet arrived at even a respectable old age. Cyclone, fire, flood, the ruthless axe of civilization—these may murder the red-wood-tree, but age has not yet wreaked her vengeance on that sublime order.

"My microscope, the most powerful made in Paris, showed, alas! undoubtedly this astonishing fact, that the oldest sequoia known had not yet reached middle life. If it were permitted to live on, it would in all probability witness the rise and bemoan the fall of our boasted American civilization. For such curves of progress and degeneracy are but ephemeral instances during its transcendent vitality.

"What's the oldest thing alive? I asked the professor next morning, as I smoked my pipe, trying to calm my vibrant nerves. As his students were off bug-hunting, we had a quiet moment to ourselves. The professor was one of those lean, spry men, whose eyes burn within their cavernous sockets, whose cheeks are high and hollow and hectic, and whose gaunt jaws are covered by fine, gray, un-

kempt hair. Driving, yet kindly, a bundle of watch-springs, yet philosophic, he combined the solidity of continental learning with the irrepressible originality of American expression.

"Lichens,' he said, sententiously, as if he were about to deliver a lecture. 'There are some lichens that never die.'

"Explain.' I looked at him, trying to control my breath. Little did he know how I suffered during those few seconds of anticipation.

"Take the verrucariaceous apothecium,' he began, lightly, as if he were discussing corn.

"Yes?'

"Have you ever been to the Grand Cañon? No! It's a pity. When you go, if you are fortunate, you will see on one of the walls a huge grayish green stain, extending two to three thousand feet in circumference. It is the apothecium. There may not be more than ten specimens in the hundreds of miles of gorge. When the river first flowed, and cut its first depression, this lichen had its birth. As the Cañon deepened, the lichen followed its fall. As the erosion averages one foot every thousand years, and the Cañon is about three thousand feet deep, you can easily calculate the age of your friend.'

"Three million years!' I exclaimed, ecstatically.

"Precisely.' He took a leisurely contemplative puff.

"But how can it exist on and on indefinitely?'

"It is because the spores are developed in the thecæ, which constitute, with the paraphyses, the hymenium.'

"Ah, I see.'

"If the interior of the conceptacle were not thickly dotted with converging filaments——'

"Of course!'

"It continually throws off spore-like bodies, found within the spermatogonium——'

"Spermatia?' I hazarded.

"Exactly so. It thus became perpetual in its cellular reproduction.'

"Why had I not thought of lichens before? Taking their nourishment from the air, they contain the elemental principle of life as much as a violet, a tree, an elephant,



a man. I saw the end of my search and sorrows. I saw in the desert of cathedral rocks, amid the fastnesses of the Grand Cañon, the everlasting fount of eternal youth, the secret of which I alone held in my possession.

"Engendered in the hour the glacier receded from the North American Continent, and alive in the day of King Edward, and in the aggression of Emperor William, and in the might of Roosevelt, it beckoned me to its arid heart.

"I should think it would be about dead by this time," I said.

"Not at all." The professor waved his hand, lightly, as if a hundred thousand years more or less were a mere turn of the palm.

"I suppose they will be living when the ice age comes again and engulfs them with the rest of us."

"When will that be?"

"In about ten million years or so."

"Then the apothecium is hardly past its teething, so to speak."

"Hardly."

"When I looked up again into the sympathetic and puzzled eyes of the professor, I burst into violent laughter, the hysterics of despair.

"Now," said the college professor, strolling up to my tent the next morning, with a shrewd glance worthy of a professional palmist, 'I have been watching you, and I wouldn't take your disappointment so bitterly. Perhaps I can help you.' He held a square pasteboard box in his hand. The box was perforated with holes. 'You are searching for the last throes of life. Is that not so?'

"I nodded, moodily.

"I suppose its some new germ theory that you bacillus bigots are running to earth."

"I suppose so," I said, warily.

"And the subject must have lived longer than the number of years supposed to be allotted to the species."

"Much longer," I said, decisively.

"Well, here's a toad."

"A toad!" I said, contemptuously. I fell back against the trunk of the redwood-tree.

"I suppose you've heard of toads being found imprisoned in coal-seams." His tone implied indulgent sarcasm.

"Of course, I have heard of such things, but there are no authenticated cases. It's all tommy-rot. Greville experimented encasting toads and frogs in clay and plaster of Paris, but none ever lived over a month."

"But still such toads have been found, and here is one whose authenticity is beyond question. I saw it dug out of a coal-seam, fifteen hundred feet under the surface."

"The professor spoke with such sane assurance that I was aroused as if by a shock of electricity.

"That was six months ago. I have carried him with me ever since. He has taken only two meals since his rescue. I want to show you his case. There, hold the box carefully. You can take the cover off; he can't move."

"With the reluctant eagerness natural to a cautious scientist, I gazed upon this world-old specimen. It seemed indeed the gift of an unknown age. The only signs of life were the infrequent heavings of the puffy chest, showing that the lungs could still work. The skin was warty, rough, and wrinkled beyond imagination, and the eyes were glued shut. I touched the animal reverently. It was as cold as the age of ice.

"Here," said the professor, interrupting my stare, 'this may convert you. This nodule fell beneath my feet at the end of one of the drifts which I was investigating. Thinking that it might be a fossil, I carefully broke it with my hammer, and the toad fell out on my palm.' The dark bluish slate showed the perfect outlines of a fossil toad. The stone had become the living amphibian's shroud.

"There is no doubt in my mind," continued the professor, gravely, 'that this batrachian was born in the Carboniferous age, when coal was forming. Burrowing in clay to hibernate during a winter, it was overwhelmed in one of Nature's stupendous catastrophes, following on the heels of the Devonian period, and thus was included in the coal-formation. It may, and it may not live more than a few hours or a day. Now, young man, tell me what you want?'

"Only a drop of its precious blood! My God! Professor, only one drop, and I'll be satisfied!" Shaken with an anxiety and



wild excitement which I could no longer repress, I trembled almost as if I should disarticulate.

"'I guess your need is greater than mine. The toad is yours,' said the professor, gravely. 'Only don't mutilate the body, I want to keep it as a specimen. You'd better hurry; there isn't much time to lose. There probably will never be found another one like it in the world.'

"'I could have thrown myself at the professor's feet. Instead, I prepared my gelatin. In ten minutes I had everything ready for the cultivation of a colony of microbes, if my fate were at hand. Then I took the antediluvian, toothless toad from its box, and bared my scalpel for its divine use. Taking the cold, unresisting creature in the palm of my left hand, I made a quick incision above the heart. Not a drop of blood flowed from its congealed arteries. I plunged the knife deeper, and looked in vain for the priceless fluid. Ah, but I must cut to the heart! If it had nothing to yield, humanity's hope had died with the death of this immortal.

"'I plunged the knife in. Then a frenzy seized me. With an oath I grasped the creature, and squeezed it in both my hands. The professor, my promise, everything was forgotten but the fact that I stood at the side of this expiring creature as sponsor for the life of the world. 'Come!' I cried. 'In the name of God Almighty, one drop of blood!'

"'Then there slowly oozed like carmine asphalt one dense globule. This I gathered upon the end of my blade. There was no moment for microscopic investigation. I thrust it into the warm gelatinous ooze, Nature's bed for bacilli. Even as I did so, I felt in my hand an icy quiver. I opened it mechanically! The Carboniferous batrachian was dead."

Doctor Cox's voice was lost in the rhythmic pounding of the screw. He lit his pipe, pulled savagely, following the tenuous smoke with his gaze as it was whiffed over the rail out into the silver sea. By the way he scowled as if in pain, I knew that the tragedy was about to be unfolded, and dared not speak. I could only wait for his errant mood to return to me. It might have been after an hour's pause that I heard a click in his throat. It must

have been only through a supreme effort that he went on.

"'It was night when I arrived in Vienna. The ladies were at the theater, not expecting me until the next day, and I had slipped upstairs, lighted my fire, and was absorbed in the contemplation of my priceless colony of microbes.

"'I looked up from my microscope. Elsa stood at the door, closely followed by Max, whose wagging tail was giving me his best greeting. Careful not to jar the table, I caught the splendid girl in my arms, and my lips met hers in the first real lover's kiss that we had exchanged.

"'It has been so long—so long!' she murmured, clinging convulsively. 'I thought I had died waiting for you, Carl, my love!'

"'The foolishness that we were guilty of during those first five minutes of transport, if nothing more than a divine memory, was surely worth a century of life. I then held my fiancée at arms' length. Her face was a little thinner and paler, which gave a new glory to her blonde beauty; but her figure was better molded, and this added dignity and womanliness.

"'Ah, dear heart,' I said, aloud, thinking of my cultures, 'you shall never die. I could not bear it.'

"'I do not want to, now I have you, Carl; but I could not have stood another month. I would have died. And Max, poor Max, he is nearly dead now. I only kept him alive by whispering in his ear that his Uncle Carl was coming. Didn't I, Max, dear?' Elsa stooped, and patted the old dog so lovingly that it brought tears to Max's eyes and mine. 'Now, tell me,' she said, brightening up, 'where is it? There? In that jar? That wonderful discovery? Do you mean to say that what is in that muddy jar can restore youth, and you had to spend a whole year away from me finding it? You shall experiment, sir, immediately on Max. Do you hear?'

"'Noting my astonishment, she added: 'Max must be saved. Hurry! He may die any minute.'

"'But, my dearest, I haven't experimented on anything yet.'

"'Then you must begin on Max right away. I shan't leave you until you do;



and, if I don't, what will mama say?"

"She looked so irresistibly roguish, and added such a potent argument, that I foolishly consented. At that moment Max uttered a deep growl.

"It's mama," said Elsa, with a pout. "Quick! There! At any rate we have had a few minutes together, haven't we?"

"There was a rustling on the stairs. There was a quick cry.

"Carl, my dearest son!" Before I realized what had happened, Elsa's mother lay in my arms, considerably closer than her daughter had been a moment before. I do not know what stirred within me, but, stunned and dazed, I strained my mother-in-law to my heart.

"Mama," cried Elsa, turning pale, "you forget that Carl has important experiments to make. It is late, and we must leave him. He is tired." Madame Von Krakenburg gave me a melting look. I could not meet it. My eyes wandered to Elsa. She evidently did not blame me in the least. She stood tapping her foot with high-spirited impatience upon the floor. Her mother had disengaged herself, and stood trembling.

"You will not forget your promise," said Elsa, in a low tone, glancing at the bewildered dog. "Max, you sleep with Carl, to-night. Carl, dear, won't you kiss me good-night?" She stole a triumphant glance at her mother. Shamefacedly, I kissed my fiancée on the lips. I did not linger there, but I felt the chaste and soothing influence that was balm to my harassed heart. Then I looked at her mother, tall, commanding, dark, magnificent and melting, and I did not know whether I hated her or loved her. Then the two women left me with Max and with my tumultuous meditations.

"But my promised experiment nerved me, and in the careful preparation of a spot above the dog's medulla for inoculation, I quite forgot the two ladies of my life. Max seemed to understand, as dogs do when you try to cure them. He did not interrupt or whine, but cocked his aged ears with interest, and tried to see out of his blind eyes. With infinite pains I injected the vivifying bacilli into his blood, sealed the wound from the air, and turned the dog into the hall to seek his mistress' room.

Then I flung myself on the bed, glad to be at home again, and yet puzzled as to the actual outcome of the amorous confusion in which I found myself snarled. Soon youth and health conquered, and I fell into a troubled sleep, only to be awakened in the morning by joyous barking and the eager scratching of a dog at my door. Wondering what could be there, I cautiously opened the door. This was pushed violently to one side, and a magnificent Newfoundland pup darted in, and, leaping all over me, began to kiss me violently.

"Whose was this creature? What could it mean? Then a mad thought illuminated me.

"Max," I cried. "Max, is that you?" At that name the pup whirled about me in ecstasy. But I could not rebuke his exuberance, for before me danced the first illustration of the vitalizing power of the serum at my command. Old age had been wiped from the face of the earth. Death could only entrap us through accident and illness. Immortal youth was the gift of my pleasure.

"After a few dabs and embraces the hurricane bolted out and down stairs. I locked the door, and threw myself upon the bed, feeling within me the power of a god, and wondering at the vast possibilities of my divine discovery.

"As yet Elsa was my only confidante. Without an exhaustive series of experiments, it would be impossible for me to give to humanity my discovery. A thousand problems of proportion, strength, and number of inoculations must be solved beyond a peradventure of a doubt. For the first time I had become reconciled to animal experimentations, for my laboratory work would consist not in torture but in giving joy, not in vivisection but in vivifying, and I began to gather all the old and worn-out animals I could find. The resurrection of Max had to be explained to Elsa's mother in a way that bordered on a fairy tale. I was alleged to have brought this young pup with me to take the place of the old dog I had mercifully disposed of; but the strange thing was that the young Max seemed to have his senile antipathy to Madame Von Krakenburg redoubled in his rejuvenescence, to use the appropriate word. This antipathy became so serious



that the dog had to be kept chained except when he was in Elsa's room, in mine, or out walking. But the noble beast seemed never so happy as when Elsa and I were together.

"Dear heart," I pleaded, about a week after my return, 'why can we not marry at once? I need you so much.' Indeed my need of her was becoming urgent. Whenever Elsa took Max out for a morning walk, her mother would run up to my room, ostensibly to put it in order. I do not dare to think of the wild passion that swept like a sirocco over my nature at those times. My heart would cry out for Elsa, while my lips were snarled in what Madame Von Krakenburg was pleased to call a 'mother's kiss.' I was on fire, and, loathing the dual part that I became willing to play, I longed for the flame on the one side to consume me, and for the sweet peace of Elsa on the other hand to calm and comfort me.

"As yet Elsa could not suspect my disloyalty, nor could I explain it. She was curiously devoted to her mother, for whom her placid nature had no feeling of jealousy except when we three were together and Madame Von Krakenburg overstepped the boundary natural to a future mother-in-law. Was ever a man in such a predicament? As I sat between the two at table, and looked from the one to the other, my heart gave alternate leaps. I adored the one, and I could not live without the other. If Elsa had married me then and there, the future of mankind would have been immeasurably changed.

"It was on a day when I found myself peculiarly distraught by the strange entanglement in which I was placed that Elsa's mother received a call from General Von Fersen. This officer was not only an ardent admirer of Madame Von Krakenburg but was in close touch with the Emperor at whose court Elsa's mother was once a famous maid of honor. It seemed that this general had lately persuaded the Emperor to restore to the heirs of the dead Von Krakenburg some family estates that had once been confiscated, and this meant a fortune and an independence to the beautiful widow and her daughter. Stunned by the happy news, the lady fell into a dead faint. I was hastily called, and together

the General and I carried her to her room. Elsa and I were then left together.

"As I was about to employ the common restoratives, Elsa put her hand on mine.

"'Carl,' she said in a low voice, 'I will marry you next week if you will inoculate mama now. She will never know it, dear mama.'

"'Nonsense, Elsa!' I exclaimed. 'Don't talk foolishly. I must bring her to.'

"'Carl, dearest, you do not understand. I declare I will never marry you at all if you do not do this for me. Mama has been so unhappy, and, with this new fortune, youth will mean everything to her. I cannot bear to have her grow old. Will you, Carl? And we will be married next week.'

"'But, my God! Elsa, don't you see?' I exclaimed, madly.

"'What? See what?' Elsa asked, wonderingly. Then she straightened herself.

"'You can choose. Take me or lose me. Now, Carl?' I glanced from the indignant girl to the silent and royal woman who even in her pallor thrilled me with a powerful passion.

"'Elsa! Elsa!' I said. 'You know not what you ask. Anything else. My God! I cannot do it, and I cannot refuse.'

"'That or nothing.' She spoke with the icy decision peculiar to the blonde temperament.

"'My cultures were always ready.'

"'Very well,' I said. 'The result is on your own future. I pressed a kiss to my fiancée's lips, and slowly mounted the stairs to my room, hoping that the faint would pass by, and relieve me of my weak promise. When I returned, the woman was still motionless. Hectic with excitement, Elsa watched the process. It was so simple, so fraught with fateful results! In a moment the bacilli of life were sporting in the mother's veins, warring with age and death.

"'How terribly you look,' cried Elsa, glancing up. Then the unconscious woman moved. With a physician's anxiety I peered into her face as her eyes opened. To my frenzied imagination it seemed as if those crow's-feet, indicators of time, were even now disappearing.

"'Carl!' cried the lady, with outstretched arms. Then a puzzled look stole over her



features, and with a deep sigh she sank into profound sleep.

"But I could stand it no longer. 'Tomorrow morning, the living-room as usual, before breakfast,' I whispered to Elsa. Ten minutes later I plunged into the frosty winter air, not knowing where I was going, only intent upon getting away from the terrible complication.

"I did not enter until long after midnight, and then I could not sleep. Brunette and blonde, death and life, seemed warring in insane phantasmagoria within my fevered imagination, but rest was an impossibility. Finally I aroused myself from some weirder vision than the rest, and, after a cold plunge, dressed impatiently. I was cooled and comforted, and my heart cried out to Elsa and her trustful love.

"Early the next morning I stole downstairs to the dining-room, where the little German maid had already lighted an open fire. Its morning cheer made my whole nature smile, and I forgot everything but my promised bride.

"I heard Elsa's familiar rustle on the stair, and boyishly I turned my back so as to appear surprised and thus prolong the joy of the greeting. A few light steps across the room, two arms entwined them-

selves about my neck, and I felt a glowing cheek pressed to mine, and the breath of a garden of jasmine intoxicated my senses. I closed my eyes in ecstasy, and turning, took the divine creature in my arms, raining upon her face, her mouth, kisses which were avariciously accepted and returned. Such bliss as this beautiful woman bestowed upon me is reserved for few to experience.

I could have fainted in my joy. At the moment when it seemed as if heaven had taken the place of this inhospitable earth, I was brought back by a cold, cutting voice from the doorway.

"'Carl,' it said, 'Carl, what does this mean?' Opening my eyes, I saw Elsa in the doorway. She seemed surprised and indignant. In my arms lay the most beautiful woman I had ever seen—a human Jacqueminot—radiant with love, redolent with passion.

Ah, it was a woman for whom a man would commit a thousand crimes, and suffer a thousand deaths for one touch of her crimson lips!

"'Who is this woman?' cried Elsa, in a commanding tone. 'Explain her presence in your arms.' There the two creatures confronted each other. Passion and peace dueled for the mastery.



*Drawn by George T. Tobin.*

"'WHO IS THIS WOMAN?' CRIED ELSA."



"'Do you not know me, Elsa?' the stranger asked, with a triumphant smile—such as only comes to the mouth of a successful rival. Elsa and I gave each other a quick, comprehensive look. Her tender, blue eyes expressed forgiveness, horror, self-accusation and hopeless misery. Ah, what had she done? What had I done?

"'Well,' cried the splendid creature, 'is this the way that I am received by my daughter? Carl was more sympathetic in his greeting. Oh, I live, I dance, I sing for joy, and I am so happy! I am just beginning to live. I feel as if I were born again. Carl, tell me, am I really beautiful again—or is it a dream? If it is, I will die. I could not bear to go back. Elsa, Carl, will you not explain? She stood there glancing from one to the other, for we could not speak, as the success of the experiment burst over our disordered minds. For I had conjured from the past, through the blood of the toad, the most glorious woman that my eyes had ever beheld. There she stood, vibrant with life, glowing with youth, eager with the enthusiasm of girlhood, a poem of passion, an ode to ecstasy, and with a heart that quivered with forty-five years of experience. I looked upon this creature of my microbes with blinded eyes. Who could withstand her? She was the incarnation of love. She was the empress, nay the temptress, of the world. Beside her, Elsa seemed a pale replica; but there was that hovering about the girl's lips which made me wonder that I could ever have wavered.

"'Mama,' said Elsa, her lips dry, her tone quiet. 'Carl did it; I asked him. I promised to marry him if he would. That is his great discovery. He made Max young. Now he has made you young. I—I did not know, I did not realize——' The noble girl swayed, and I bounded to her side. 'It is nothing,' she continued, with great dignity. 'Do not touch me, Carl. It is evident that you have a decision to make. You can make it now.'

"'Before her daughter had finished, the young mother had thrown herself at my feet, and was kissing my hand.

"'My benefactor! My god! My creator!' she exclaimed, in increasing vehemence.

"'There was a bounding on the stairs! A whirlwind in the shape of a big dog rushed in. It was Max. Seeing the hated woman at my feet, he seized her by the arm, and held her in a growling grip.

"'This broke the terrible tension. In an instant I had caught the dog by the muzzle, and forced his reluctant jaws apart, dragging him by the collar.

"'I will chain him up,' I said. At the door I stopped, and looked back. Decide? A Jupiter could not have decided. I loved Elsa—I adored her impetuous mother.

"'When I found myself in my laboratory with the dog, I doubly bolted the door. By this time madness had taken possession of my mind. To what impossible end had my impious ambition brought me! How I cursed those jars of jelly filled with life! I raged before the phalanx of glasses, of test-tubes and beakers filled with bacilli, shaking my fist at each in order. The window was unlocked. I threw it open for breath. Outside, the air was crisp, and the snow crunched and creaked under horses and sleighs.

"'Ah, what misery had I caused when I dreamed of joy and glory to mankind! Is it possible that God knew better than man?

"'The idea had never occurred to me. I thought it man's business to outwit God, and this was the result, this topsyturvydom of love.

"'Something stronger than my will impelled me. I took up a jar, and threw it out of the window. It fell with a crash. A few minutes, and eternal life had frozen to death. 'If one, why not all, old boy?' I cried, turning to Max, who wagged his splendid tail encouragingly. Then followed a mad fusillade of microbes. Ah, how the world would have cried out for mercy if it had known what slaughter I was committing!

"'Suddenly I stopped, aghast. The last jar had gone, and the gift of the toad had been irretrievably destroyed. God! how we spend the best of our years in searching for life, and how we cast it away! May I never experience such a horrible conflict again. I blessed, I cursed, I rejoiced, I regretted, I stormed, I prayed, I hated, and I loved. At last overcome, broken of life, lost of ambition, and forever deprived of joy, I threw myself on the bed,



and sank into blessed unconsciousness, Nature's calm for the storms that wreck and kill.

"That night I packed my bag, and softly stole away as I had come but a few weeks before. I did not see the two women again, but the fleeting kisses of Max's cold nose are still upon my cheek.

"For two years I have been a wanderer, although I have left with Elsa my address in case I am called; but I never expect to hear from them again."

It was long past midnight. I silently wrung the sufferer's hand, and slipped into my room, leaving him sunk in sleepless reverie. The next morning we were up at six. The fog was lazily lifting as the steamer mowed its way slowly up the motionless channel. It was low tide. A dory defiantly sculled across our bow with a big Newfoundland vigorously pursuing it, yapping the salt water from its mouth. At sight of the animal I gravitated toward Doctor Cox, who was at the extreme bow.

"Why not breakfast together at the Grand?"

"All right," he assented, resuming his hopeless stare, the look of a man searching for that which he knows he can never find. The kindly customs officers did not trouble us, as we had no bicycles or whisky, their *bête noire*. Half an hour later we were seated in a spacious dining-room, waited on by freckled girls who brought us huckleberries and little else. Both of us were ineffably bored. It seemed so petty com-

pared with the tremendous drama enacted by the silent man with his back to the door. The tourists were shoveling in the berries contentedly like cows. Then there was a hush in the clatter. The young clerk stood in the door, flourishing a yellow envelope.

"Dr. Charles Cox!" he called. "Is Doctor Cox here?"

The doctor turned a ghastly shade.

"You take it," he said, "I dare not."

Mechanically I held out my hand, while the blood leaped within me. Somehow I felt that I was providentially in at the finish.

"Open it," he commanded. "Read it first, Doctor—then tell me."

The message had been forwarded from the Doctor's lawyer in Boston, and read thus:—

"Mama found dead in bed this morning. Max guarding her. Come.

"Elsa."

As I read this call from another continent, the face of my vis-à-vis became changed as through a potent conjuration. Happiness is, after all, the surest elixir of life. He threw off twenty years in twenty seconds. His face radiated power and manhood, for his joy was sublime.

"My God!" he cried. "I did love Elsa! Quick! There is no time—Good-by, Doctor, good-by. You were very good." Languor and restlessness had vanished like mist. He passed out of the stuffy room like a whirlwind, vital as an electric current, and was gone.







HE sat, tense and rigid with excitement, expectancy, incredulity. Was it possible, after so many years of study, effort and failure? Could it be that at last success rewarded him? He hardly dared to breathe lest he should miss something of the wonderful spectacle. How long he had sat thus he did not know; he had not stirred for hours—or was it days?—except to adjust the light by means of the button under his hand.

His laboratory, at the foot of his garden, was lighted day and night in the inner room (his private workshop) with electricity, and no one was admitted but by especial privilege.

Some things he had accomplished for the good of mankind, more he hoped to accomplish, but most of all he had been searching for, and striving to create, the life-germ. He had spent many of his years and much of his great wealth in unsuccessful experiments. He had met ridicule and unbelief with Stoical indifference, upheld by the conviction that he would finally prove the truth of his theories. Over and over again, defeat and disappointment had dashed aside his hopes; over and over again, he had rallied and gone on with dogged persistence.

And now! He could not realize it yet!

He leaned back, and clasped his hands over his closed eyes. Perhaps he had imagined it—his overstrained nerves having deceived him. Was it an optical illusion? It had happened before. There had been times when he felt that he had torn aside the veil, and grasped the secret, only to find that a few abortive movements were all that existed of his creation. In sudden haste he turned to the glass again.

A—h! He drew a long breath that was almost a shriek. It was not illusion of sight, no delusion of his mind. The creature—it was plainly a living creature—had grown, and taken shape, even in those few moments. It lived! It breathed! It moved! And his the power that had given it life! His breath came in gasps, his heart beat in great throbs, and his blood surged through his veins.

But soon his scientific sense asserted itself, and he carefully and minutely studied the prodigy. Its growth was phenomenal; the rapidity of its expansion was past belief. It took form, developed limbs, made repeated attempts at locomotion, and finally drew itself out of the glass receptacle of cunningly compounded liquid in which it had been created.

At that the learned professor leaped to



his feet in a transport of exultation. The impossible had been achieved! Life! Life, so long the mystery and despair of man, had come at his bidding. He alone of all humanity held the secret in the hollow of his hand. He plunged about the room in a blind ecstasy of triumph. Tears ran unknown and unheeded down his cheeks. He tossed his arms aloft wildly, as if challenging Omnipotence itself. At that moment, he felt a very god! He could create worlds, and people them! A burning desire seized him to rush out, and proclaim the deed from the housetops, to the utter confounding of brother scientists and the theologians.

He dropped, panting, into his chair, and strove to collect and quiet his mind. Not yet the time to make known the incredible fact. He must wait until full development proved that it was indeed a living creation—with animal nature and desires.

It had lain, quivering, on the marble slab, breathing regularly and steadily, making aimless movements. The four limbs, that had seemed but swaying feelers, grew into long, thin arms and legs, with claw-like hands, and flat, six-toed feet. It lost its spherical shape; an uneven protuberance, in which was situated the breathing-orifice, expanded into a head with rudimentary features. He took his spatula, and turned it over. It responded to the touch with an effort to rise; the head wobbled weakly, and two slits opened in the dim face, from which looked out dull, fishy eyes. It grew! Each moment found it larger, more developed; yet he could no more see the growth than he could see the movement of the hour-hand of his watch.

"It is probably of the simian order," he made memorandum. "Ape-like. Grows a strange caricature of humanity."

An aperture appeared in the oblong head, forming a lipless mouth below the lump of a nose; large ears stood out on either side.

The caricature-like resemblance to humanity increased as it grew older. It crawled a space, sat up, made many futile efforts, and at last succeeded in standing. It took a few staggering steps. It made wheezy, puffing sounds in its motions, and drove idiotically. Finally it squatted down on its haunches, the knobby knees

drawn up against the rotund paunch, the hands grasping the ankles.

"The attitude of primitive man," the Professor muttered.

For long it crouched thus, increasing in size, and beginning to display a crude intelligence; looking about with eyes that evidently saw—noted things: the arc of light, the glistening glass and brass, and, most of all, himself.

It had as yet made no manifestation that indicated desire; but soon a fly, alighting near it, was snatched up and thrust into its mouth with incredible quickness and an eager, sucking noise. At this expression of animalism, the Professor's hand shook so violently that he could scarcely record the movement.

Nervousness only! He would not admit to himself a feeling of startled misgiving. He was worn out. For days he scarcely tasted food, and he had dozed only at long intervals. A half-hour's sleep would refresh him, and the creature could not change much in that time, for its bodily development seemed nearly completed. His head dropped on his arms, and he slumbered profoundly.

He was awakened by a sense of suffocation and a gnawing at his neck; he started up with a cry, pushing off a clammy mass that lay heavy on the upturned side of his face. Merciful heaven! It was the beast attacking him; its teeth, which he had not before discovered, seeking his throat!

It lay where he had thrown it, its long tongue licking the shapeless mouth, its eyes hot with an awakened bloodthirstiness. In a wave of repulsion, he struck it savagely.

He was appalled at what he had done; he seemed to have committed a crime in striking it.

He went to the anteroom, where fresh food was left for him daily, and selected different sorts, questioning whether any would or could satisfy a creature which had been brought into existence in such a marvelous manner.

It met him, with alert expectancy, and ate, with a ravenous gluttony that was loathsome, of all that he put before it.

Apparently it possessed all the animal senses; all had been tested but hearing. He spoke a few words in an ordinary tone;



it lifted its face, with an expression of inquiry.

He paced the room in perplexed thought. Could it possess mental faculties beyond those of an ordinary animal? He had not hoped to produce anything but a lower form of life. Never had he imagined a creature of his creating, with consciousness of its existence; that was a responsibility for which he was not prepared.

Exhausted in body and mind, he locked the creature in the inner room, and threw himself on the couch in his study for a night's rest.

The creature was standing when he entered, next morning, and, stepping toward him, it correctly repeated every word he had spoken the night before, as if reciting a lesson, showing an eager expectancy of approval.

"Good heavens!" ejaculated the Professor, reeling against the door.

"Good heavens!" it echoed, its small orbs sparkling.

He sprang toward it as if to force back this evidence of intelligent reason; it fled, keeping the table between them; brought to bay, it dropped on its knees, and put

up beseeching hands, mumbling a prayer—a prayer from its own inner consciousness!

Aghast, terrified, he gazed at it, tremblingly assuring himself that many animals made imitative sounds—parrots readily learned human speech.

The curious creature had shown no bodily growth for several days; it had perhaps

reached maturity, and would soon show signs of decay. Already a lump had appeared on its breast, which it picked at uneasily; he must not much longer delay exhibiting it. Yet he hesitated to do so until he was more certain concerning it.

He tested its power with a multitude of words that it not only easily repeated but retained perfectly, muttering them over, forming and reforming a number of proper sentences with various def-

initions, which it seemed to submit, in comparison, to some inner or waking intelligence.

Once, after long muttering, it came to him, with timid perplexity, and put the astonishing question: "What am I?" And when he answered not for amazement the poor creature wandered about, repeating



*Drawn by E. Hering.*

"IT GREW!"



the words. Like one rallying from long unconsciousness, it seemed seeking a dimly remembered clue to its identity.

Fear clutched him! Impossible! Oh, impossible that he had a human soul imprisoned in such hideous form! A soul that would, by and by, fully awake to the wrong he had done it! No! No! He spurned the thought as a wild fancy. But even so—he had done nothing unlawful. Man was free to use his intellect to the utmost. He had brought into existence a living creature, but he was not responsible farther than the body. To the Keeper of souls be the rest.

Possibly some long-disembodied spirit, grown wise in its freedom, animated the creature, and its full development would open a channel for such knowledge as the earth had never before known, and the world would ring with his name, and honor and fame be his! Again he exulted while making record of its mental unfoldment, which was as rapid as had been the development of its uncouth body, and with much the same distortion. It recognized him as its creator, did him reverence, and obeyed his commands.

The lump, which he had taken for a symptom of decay, assumed the appearance of a large scale, and dropped off. When he would have examined it more closely, the creature put a hand over it, looking up at him with a show of hostility and cunning, for the first time disregarding his command; and he would not enforce obedience.

He was confounded next morning to find that the scale had developed into a second creature! About it the first hovered with evident joy and pride, inviting his attention to it with the gushing babble of a child. He had not imagined it possessed the power of generation, but here was reproduction with an ease and rapidity beyond any creature of like size in existence.

The second one, fed and taught by the first, matured in body and mind more quickly; and they invented or discovered a speech of their own—a strange jargon (of which he could make nothing) by which they exchanged thoughts and conversed, and which he tried in vain to help them reduce to a written language, through which he might obtain the wisdom for which he hoped.

And reproduction went on; while he subjected them to many tests to determine their nature.

As they grew in age and numbers, they began to evince for him less reverence; and an animosity appeared, that burst out at times in a horrible flow of invectives—a mingling of their own strange speech and his.

When he did not comply with their desires, they wailed piteously—demanding: “Why?” “Why?”—or hurled blasphemous defiance at him.

These things convinced him that they were a lower order of humanity, possessing souls; for no creature but man observed, with like or dislike, the bodily form in which its life was manifested. He was torn and racked with dread and a crushing sense of guilt and responsibility. It was as if he had started an avalanche that might overwhelm the world.

Already they had become a heavy burden to him. He was obliged to make nightly visits to the markets for food to satisfy their rapacity—food which he flung to them as to so many dogs, and which they pounced upon and fought over, with curses at each other's greed. Yet at a word of reproof from him, they banded solidly against him, each for all.

All complacency over his handiwork had vanished; never could he bring himself to exhibit to mortal eye these repulsive creatures. His only thought was the unanswerable question: what should he do with them? On this he brooded continually, reaching no conclusion because he could no more contemplate destroying creatures possessing human intelligence, however distorted and degraded, than he could have taken the life of a born idiot or one insane.

In his absorption he neglected to lock the door one day, and roused to find them swarming in his study. Besides the high skylight there was one large window, securely closed by a heavy inside shutter, above which was a long, narrow opening admitting air. Some of them, clinging to shutter and casement, and uttering low, sharp cries, like wolves scenting their prey, had climbed to the opening, and were peering out with gloating eyes. They clawed and jibbered, with hot tongues lolling eagerly, the saliva dripping from their ugly mouths



—hideous pictures of unsatiated animal appetite.

And what was it that so aroused their ghoulish lust? His little children playing on the lawn, their innocent voices rising like heavenly music in contrast to the hellish sounds within. A rippling laugh floated on the air, and the creatures' eagerness increased to a fury; with tooth and nail they strove to enlarge the opening, not heeding his horrified commands.

In a frenzy of rage, he snatched an iron rod, and swept them to the floor, driving them with blows and maledictions to their room. They fled before his wrath, but when he turned his back to lock the door, they flung themselves upon him, with desperate attempts to reach his throat.

After a sharp battle, he beat them off, and sent them huddling and whimpering to a corner. "Monsters! Monsters!" he cried, pale with the discovery. "Monsters, who would prey on human flesh! What a curse I have called forth! It is of the devil!"

"Devil; devil; yes, devil," one muttered, a leering and malicious knowledge gleaming in its oblique eyes.

In that moment he saw his duty—all hesitation vanished, and he made up his mind—they must be destroyed effectually, and he could not survive the destruction.

By that occult sense or power they possessed, which was beyond anything he had ever found in man, they divined his decision almost as soon as it was formed, and prostrated themselves with cries of mercy. They hastened to lay at his feet propitiatory offerings of their belongings: cards, pencils, picture-books—all that he had provided for their amusement and instruction—entreating him for life, the life that he himself had given them.

Their prayers and offerings rejected, the creatures became his open enemies. Intent on escaping from their prison, his every entrance was a battle with their persistent efforts to gain control of the door, the only outlet to the room.

They were not easily injured. No maiming nor bruises resulted from his hasty blows with the rod. Would it be possible to destroy them? Their bodily substance resembled clammy putty in appearance, with the consistency of rubber. He had never

conquered his repugnance sufficiently to handle one. He could not experiment upon them, but the chemicals he meant to employ with the most powerful explosives, he trusted, would make the work of annihilation swift and thorough.

His preparations were delayed and hindered by their never-ending attempts to overcome him. The moment he became absorbed in his work, they crawled and crept with malignant insistence to a fresh attack. Once, in a movement of defense, he pricked the body of one with a sharpened tool, and he was almost suffocated by the fumes that arose from the yellow, viscid fluid that oozed from the wound.

Escaping from the affrighted, indignant uproar that followed, he stood at his study-window to recover from the dizzy sickness. "That alone would make them formidable enemies of mankind," he muttered. "The slaughter of a few would put to flight an army. Turned loose, they are sufficient now in numbers, with all their hellish characteristics, to lay waste this teeming city. Wretched, impotent creator that I am! Could I but turn back the dial of time a few short weeks how happily I could take my place beside the most ignorant toiler, and meddle no more with the prerogative of the Almighty!"

In a few hours, the wound had healed, no trace of injury remaining; but they had learned new reason to fear him, and skulked about glowering, commenting upon him with shameless, insulting epithets.

He found a note from his wife in his mail, informing him of the arrival in the city of a noted scientist whose coming had been largely of his arranging, months before. There was much dissatisfaction expressed at his absence, and demands were made that he attend the forthcoming banquet.

"Of course, you will go," she wrote. "And, dear, do come in early enough to give a little time to your family. We have hardly seen you for weeks and weeks; and, though I have obeyed the law, I so long to see you that I have been tempted to transgress, and boldly make my way to you. Baby, who was just beginning to totter about when you saw him last, runs easily now on his sturdy little legs, and he can say 'papa' quite plainly. Do come, dear; a few hours with us will rest you."



Rest indeed! Heaven itself could seem no sweeter to the miserable man than this glimpse of his home. His dear wife, content to live the life Omnipotence had planned for her; his sweet children, daily and harmoniously unfolding new graces of mind and body like lovely flowers—not for him was it to see their perfected maturity, from which he had hoped so much. With a groan he dropped his head, and wept bitter tears—tears that meant the renunciation of his own forfeited life.

All was complete when the banquet-day arrived. He had but to press a small knob in the floor, and the mighty currents of electricity would flash around the room, setting in motion forces of such tremendous power and instantaneous action that the entire space would instantly be one flame, of an intensity that no conceivable matter could withstand.

He had taken extraordinary precautions to guard the works from the curiosity and cunning of the creatures, protecting the button that controlled the whole with a metallic cover, which was held closely to the floor by screws.

And now he looked upon the creatures, itemizing their hideousness, as if to prepare a paper descriptive of them for this gathering of scientific authorities. Pygmies, between three and four feet in height, immensely strong; long, thin, crooked limbs, in some of unequal length; squat, thick bodies; pointed heads, bald but for a tuft of hair at the crown; huge ears, that loosely flapped, dog-like; nose, little more than wide nostrils; mouth, a mere long slit, with protruding teeth; and eyes, ah! eyes that showed plainly far more than animal intelligence. They were small, oblique, set closely together, of a beady black, their only lids being a whitish membrane that swept them at intervals—but they sparkled and glowed with passion, dimmed with tears, and widened with thought. Those eyes, more than a score of them, were fixed upon him now with entreaty, menace, fear, revolt, and, most of all, judgment burning in their depths. Even the smaller ones, of which there were many in various sizes, eyed him with resentment and hate, while scurrying, like frightened rats, from corner to corner as he moved about.

Let accident put him for a moment in their power, and the whole pack would be upon him, and tear him to shreds, as they would any human being. Yet so strange, so monstrous was this unprecedented creation, mingling of lowest animal ferocity and human mind and soul, that he had found it quite possible to teach them to read and write, and work mathematical problems, and they were perhaps capable of considerable education—but without one redeeming trait. Earth had no place for such.

Their taste for blood was appalling; of all the food he offered, they preferred raw meat, the more gory the better. He had provided a quantity to employ them while he was away, and left them snarling over it.

He tried to put all thought of them behind him as he locked the doors. For a few hours he would be free, rid of torment and anticipation. But a deep melancholy shadowed the happiness of his reunion with his family, and gloom sat with him at the banquet-table. He took no part in the festivities and discussions, and was so manifestly unfit to do so that none urged him. Only when the distinguished guest touched on the subject of the possibility—or impossibility, as he viewed it—of producing life chemically, did he rouse to interest.

"It can never be done," asserted the guest, "for the giving of the breath of life is the prerogative of the Omnipotent alone."

"Ah, but Professor Levison believes otherwise, and hopes some day to astonish us by exhibiting a creature which he has created, but whether beast or human we will have to wait for time to reveal!" one said, with light sarcasm.

"And in the impossibility to determine beforehand what the creation shall be lies my objection to man's assuming the responsibility, even if he could by any means attain to it. For who could say what a calamity might not be brought upon humanity in the shape of some detestable monstrosity, whose evil propensities would be beyond control? Science has a large field for research; one need not step aside to intrude where success, if possible, might mean widespread disaster."

The Professor shrank as from a blow, and the desire he had momentarily felt to exhibit his creation to the scoffers, and



prove the reality of his assumption, died out in despair as he thought what an intolerable, devilish curse that creation was.

No. Nothing remained but silence and annihilation. He wondered, vaguely, as to the state of himself and his creatures in that place beyond the seething crucible of fire through which they would shortly pass together.

His wife was alarmed at his worn face and the dull apathy with which he spoke of the meeting, to which he had formerly looked with such eagerness.

"Dear," she said, pleadingly, "you are wearing yourself out; drop everything, and rest. What will all the experiments and discoveries in the world matter to us if we have not you? Come, take a vacation, and let us go on our long-planned visit."

"I cannot now," he said, so decisively that she felt it useless to insist.

"At any rate, you can give yourself a few hours' rest. Do not go back to the laboratory to-night."

"Oh, but I must!" he exclaimed. Then, taking her in his arms, he added: "My dearest, I cannot stay now, but I am planning to take a long rest soon." This was for her comfort afterward.

He gazed at his sleeping children with yearning tenderness, and took leave of her with a solemn finality of manner that increased her anxiety. "It is as if he never expected to see us again," she murmured, tearfully.

From his study he could hear the creatures leaping, laughing, wrangling, forgetful as children of the impending fate they so clearly realized in his presence. He pitied, but could not save, them.

And now the hour had come—all things waited the last act. But, like the condemned criminal taking leave of earth in a last lingering gaze, he longed for another farewell glimpse of the home he would enter no more.

Going to the anteroom he threw open the shutter, and leaned out. How quiet the night! With what divine precision all things ran their appointed course, held and guided by Omnipotence! He lifted his heart in a prayer for protection and

blessing upon the silent house which contained his dear ones. How dear he had never known till this sad hour in——

What was it? Had the day of doom burst in all its terrible grandeur? The earth rocked with awful thunderings, the very heavens were blotted out with belching flame—then, suddenly, silence and darkness enveloped him.

He opened his eyes, and looked about with feeble efforts at thought. He was in his own bed, and surely that was his wife's dear face, bathed in happy tears, bending over him, asking: "Dear husband, are you better? Do you know me?"

He nodded, smiling faintly; then memory returned, and a stream of questions rushed from his lips.

"Hush! Hush!" She stopped him with her soft hand. "Be quiet. I will tell you all, for I know you will not rest otherwise. There was a fearful explosion at the laboratory, so fearful that it was heard across the city; the whole building seemed to burst out at once into flame, and—oh, my dearest!—we feared you were in it; but a kind providence must have sent you to the outer room, for you were blown through the hall-window, and you were rescued from the burning débris." She paused to control her emotion.

"How long?" he asked.

"Three weeks, and you have been in a raging fever till two days ago."

"Was all destroyed?" he breathed, anxiously.

"Yes, dear; everything. Nothing was left but a few scraps of twisted metal. But we will not mind that when your precious life was spared. You can rebuild when you are entirely recovered."

"I belong to you and the children now," he murmured, in ambiguous answer, drawing her face down to his, feeling his restored life not his own.

It was clear to him what had happened. The creatures had loosened the screws of the cap covering the knob, and had themselves brought about their destruction. With a thankful sigh, he fell into a restful slumber.



## THE TINKER OF TAMLACHT.

BY SEUMAS MACMANUS.

THE Tinker of Tamlacht was a lad, long, long ago, who used to make and fix stills. And there was one day he was going across a soft bog to a place where he had to fix a still, and he was sinking over his head in it every other step he took, and the temper got the better of the poor man, and at last says he: "May the Devil take me if I come this way again."

Howsomever, he got out of the bog all right at length, and he fixed his still, and he got three shillings for the job.

On his way back, he met a poor man, who told him he was in great distress and asked him for help; and the Tinker put his hand in his pocket and reached him one of the three shillings. He hadn't gone half a mile farther on when another poor man appears before him, and had another great story of distress entirely for him, and asked the Tinker for help. Now the Tinker, for he was a good-natured soul, put his hand in his pocket and reached him another of the shillings, and then he trudged on again; and what would you have of it but afore



Drawn by  
Frederic Dorr Steele

"INTO HIS POCKET THE TINKER QUICKLY THRUSTS HIS HAND."

he covered another half mile of the ground a third poor man appears before him, with a tale of distress, too, and a pitiful face, and begged for help.

"Well," says the Tinker, says he, "I have just one shillin' in my pocket, and I have a wife and children in want at home, and I'll divide the shillin' with you."

But says the poor man, says he: "Don't break on it, for God's sake, for anything less than a shillin' would be of little use to me."

Without any more ado, into his pocket the Tinker quickly thrusts his hand, and reaches out his third and last shilling and the last ha'penny he had in the world to the poor man, and the minute he did this says the poor man till him, says he: "I am an angel from heaven who just came to try you, and appeared before you as three, different, poor men; and now, in reward for the kindly heart you have toward the poor, I will grant you any three requests you like to ask."

The Tinker, he thanked him right heartily; and then he thought what three requests he should ask of him. Wherever he went it was always a trouble to him that



Drawn by Frederic Dorr Steele

"AND NOW," SAYS THE DEVIL, "I HAVE COME FOR MY DUE!"



people were stealing things out of his budget, so he thought it would be a grand thing, entirely, if he could remedy it once and for all. And, as a first request, he asked that anything he would put into his budget might never come out again till he would take it out himself.

The Angel said that was granted, and asked him what was his second request. And, after he had thought over in his mind for a while, says the Tinker, says he: "I have one apple-bush growin' in my garden, and I never can get any good of it, for the blackguards of Tamlacht always steal every apple off it, and I would ask it as a request that any one who leaves a hand on them apples may stick to the apple and to the bush till I release them myself."



*Drawn by Frederic Dorr Steele.*

"HE LEFT DEATH STICKING TO THE TREE FOR FORTY YEARS."

"That's granted, too," said the Angel. "What is your third request?"

"Well, as we're both poor and bothered at home," says the Tinker, "and our meal-chest's low, I ask, as a request, that it may be filled and will be never empty more."

"That's granted, too," says the Angel, "and it's sorry I am for you that you didn't ask, as your first and greatest request, to have God's blessing."

Says the Tinker, says he: "True enough, God's blessin' would be a fine request to ask; but, if I had it itself, would it thicken our stirabout for us? Would it

break the bones of Tamlacht blackguards for me when they'd go stealin' off my wee apple-tree and puttin' their hands in my budget?"

The Angel, he shook his head; and he went away.

Now, in ten days' time, he was going to fix another still, and he was going over the selfsame road and through the same bog, sinking over his head every step he took; and, when he was right in the middle of it, the Devil come to him and reminded him of his prayer that he might take him if he ever went that way again.

"And now," says the Devil, "I have come for my due."

There was no way out of it, but to start away with the Devil, and the two of them started off on their journey. And, when they were coming near a town, says the Tinker to the Devil: "I'll be all ashamed, passin' through this town where everybody knows me, and them seein' you with me."

"Well," says the Devil, says he, "if you can contrive any way of hidin' me, I am willin' to be obligin'."

"I can that," says the Tinker, says he. "If you only put yourself into the smallest bulk; and, I suppose," says he, "a bit of lead is the smallest you can put yourself into. And then I will put you in my budget, and, as I go through the town, no one will be any the wiser."

The Devil (for, to give him his dues, he was obliging) turned himself into a bit of lead at once, and the Tinker put him in his budget, and then he hoisted the budget on his back and started off.

In the middle of the town there was a blacksmith's forge, and into the blacksmith's forge the Tinker went, and left down the budget on the anvil.

There were six, big, strong fellows standing around, and the Tinker asked every one of them to take a sledge. "For," says he, "as I came along the road I found somethin' movin' in my budget, and I believe it's nothin' good. So the six of ye hammer at this budget for dear life till ye's kill it, whatever it is."

Every one of the six took a sledge, and the Devil he began to roar inside the budget, but out he couldn't get without the Tinker's liberty.

The six fellows began to lay on the



budget with all the nerves of their heart; and, every time the sledge-hammer came down on him, the Devil gave a yell. And the louder he yelled the louder they hammered.

The whole town was alarmed by the Devil's screeching; and, at length and at last, when there was nothing else for it, up the Devil flies, budget and all, and carried away the roof with him in a flame of fire and disappeared.

It was not long till the Tinker's wife had a young son, and she told him to go out and look for a sponsor for it.

The first man he met was the landlord, and he asked the Tinker where he was going.

"Lookin' for a sponsor for my child," says the Tinker.

"Will you take me as a sponsor?" says the landlord.

"I will not," says the Tinker "for you are a sorry man. You've smiles for them that are rich, and nothin' but growls for them that are poor." And he passed on.

And the next he met was God, and he asked the Tinker to take him as a sponsor.

"I'll not have you," says the Tinker, "because you let stingy Bodach MacPartlan grow richer every day, while the poor Widow Managhan, who is helpless, is let grow poorer every day."

And then he went on, and the next he met was Death, and Death asked him: "Will you take me as sponsor?"

"Yes," says the Tinker, says he, "I'll take you; for you're the only fair and just man, and have no more respect for the rich than you have for the poor."

And he took Death home with him. And Death stood sponsor for his child.

"And now," says Death to the Tinker, "since you favored me as you have done, and since you don't seem to have a very good way on you, I would like to put you in a good way to rear up my godson. So," says he, "here's a little bottle that will never be empty. Take it; and wherever



*Drawn by Frederic Dorr Steele.*

"AND DEATH STOOD SPONSOR FOR HIS CHILD."

you find any one sick, high or low, this bottle will cure them, provided," says he, "that it isn't their last sickness."

"And how," says the Tinker, says he, "am I to know?"

"I'll tell you that," says Death. "When you're brought into a sick-room you will always see me standing either at the head or the foot of the bed. If I am standing at the bed-foot, you are at liberty to use the bottle and cure the patient, but if you see me standing at the bed-head, then you are not to interfere at your peril; for I have come for that sick man."

The Tinker agreed to this, and thanked him right heartily. And then, all at once, he set up for a doctor.

Wherever there was any one sick, the Tinker of Tamlacht went; and three drops





*Drawn by Frederic Dorr Steele.*

"THE TINKER WAS IN A QUANDARY."

from his bottle cured them, if they were to be cured.

The fame of him spread far and near very fast, and he was soon known and sent for all over Ireland, England, Scotland and France.

Now the King of Spain, he took bad; and, when all his doctors tried their hand on him, and gave him up, he heard tell of the Tinker of Tamlacht, that cured all men that he ever gave drink out of his bottle to, and he sent his ship to Ireland for him, and brought him over.

And, when the Tinker went into the King's bedroom, there he saw Death standing at the bed-head.

He made a pretense, of course, of feeling the King's pulse and looking at his tongue, and then says he: "My good man, you may make your will. I can do nothin' for you."

When the King heard this he commanded that the Tinker should give him three drops out of the bottle that cured all men, but the Tinker refused to do it.

The King ordered his soldiers to take hold of him, and threatened to have him

shot through the heart there and then if he didn't give him the drink out of the bottle and cure him.

The Tinker was in a quandary.

Then says he: "Let every one else be cleared out of the room except myself and the King and four strong men."

This was done, and then the Tinker ordered the four strong men to take hold of the bed, every one by a post, and to lift it right round, the foot where the head should be and the head where the foot should be. Then Death was standing at the King's feet. And the Tinker gave him the drink out of his bottle, and the King jumped up, alive and well again.

He loaded the Tinker down with gold, and the Tinker set out for home. But he hadn't gone far when he found a hand on his shoulder, and who do you think it was but Death; and, as you may suppose, Death was in a towering rage, entirely.

Says Death, says he: "Didn't I warn you, on your peril, not to try to cure any man that you saw me waiting for? You have broken your bargain, so come with me yourself, now."

"Very well and good," says the Tinker. "I'll do that. The only request I ask is



*Drawn by Frederic Dorr Steele.*

"HE LOADED THE TINKER DOWN WITH GOLD."



that we may go through Ireland, and I may take one look at my own wee cabin again."

Death, he granted him this; and, when they were going past his own cabin, says the Tinker, says he: "There's bonny apples on that bush of mine in my garden, and they're waterin' my teeth. If you would only pull me one of them, I'd be happy, and I'd never forget you for it."

Bad as Death was, he was not disobliging; so into the garden to pull him an apple he goes. And, when he put his hand on the apple, his hand stuck to the apple, and the apple stuck to the tree, and, if he was pulling and tugging from that day to this day, free from it he couldn't get himself.

The Tinker, he never minded him; but he went in home, and he went about his business as usual.

He left Death sticking to the tree for forty years, and during all that time he had a free hand and cured everybody, and there was no one in the whole world dying.

And, after forty years, the Tinker was passing by the tree one day, and he looks at Death sticking to the tree, and says he to Death: "Is it there you are yet?"

"If you let me down," says Death, says he. "I will give you sparings for forty years."

The Tinker, he agreed; and he let Death go, and there was plenty dying after that.

At the end of the forty years, Death come to the Tinker and told him his time was up.

"Very well and good," says the Tinker, "I'm ready to go with you. Only, we'll go home till I bid good-by to my wife and children first."

Death agreed to this; and, when they got into the Tinker's house, Death told him to hurry up and not be long.

"I'll not be long," says the Tinker.

There was a bit of a candle burning on

the Tinker's table, and it was nearly burned out.

Says the Tinker: "I'll only ask till that candle burns out, and then I'll go with you."

Death said that was reasonable, and he would grant it.

And, when he said this, the Tinker blew out the candle, and says he: "You will have more than a week to wait."



*Drawn by Frederic Dorr Steele.*

"IT'S THE TINKER OF TAMLACHT I HAVE," SAYS DEATH."

And he took the bit of candle away, and he buried it nineteen feet deep in a bog.

And then Death watched that bog for forty years more till the bog wore down to where the bit of candle was; and, when he got it, he burned it out and then set off for the Tinker, and said he would have to come with him now.

"I'm both ready and willin' to come now," says the Tinker, "but," says he,



"as I'm only too afeard I haven't given much attention to my soul for the last hundred years or so, I would wish, if it's not too unreasonable, that you give me time to say three Pater and Aves to try and make my peace before I go with you."

"Well, it isn't unreasonable," says Death, "and I grant it with a heart and a half."

"Then," says the Tinker, "I'll never say a Pater and Ave more."

And Death, he went away in a rage; and no wonder!

Then, for near a hundred of years, the Tinker of Tamlacht was going about doctoring and curing, and piling up houses and houses full of wealth. And there was one night he was driving home from curing a man, and, passing over



*Drawn by Frederic Dorr Steele.*

"HE MADE HIM A STRAPPING, YOUNG FELLOW OF EIGHTEEN."

a bridge, he heard a great moaning and groaning underneath.

"What's wrong with you, my poor man?" calls the Tinker. "I'm the Tinker of Tamlacht, and I'll soon cure you."

"But you can't cure me," says he, "for I died three hundred years ago. There was a penance laid on me, when I was alive, to say three Pater and Aves for my sins, and I died without doing my penance; and I never got rest, and I never will, till a kind Christian does my penance for me."

"Then I'll soon release you, poor soul," says the Tinker.

And down on his knees he got, there and then, and said them; and that minute Death jumped up, for it was Death was in

it, and says he: "I have you at last!"

And with him the poor Tinker had to go this time, sure enough. He brought him first up to heaven, and, when they came to the gates, St. Peter asked: "Who have you here?"

"The Tinker of Tamlacht," says Death, "and a long time I was waiting for him."

"He's the man," says Peter, "that wouldn't have God as sponsor for his child, so he will not come in here."

"Well and good," says Death. "We'll try elsewhere."

And the pair of them started off down to hell, and, as they knocked at the gates there, the Devil inquired who he had.

"The Tinker of Tamlacht," says Death.

"Take him away, take him away out of this!" says the Devil, says he, "for he'll not get in here. I got enough of that lad," says he, "and I'm sure I don't want any more of him; he'd make hell too hot."

"There you are," says Death, says he; "you see your character's everywhere afore you. What am I to do with you?"

"Well," says the Tinker, "you took me away without me wishin' for it, and now you must provide for me."

Says Death: "I can't provide for you, and, since no one will take you off my hands, I can't be bothered with you any longer. What would you like yourself? I'll do what I can for you."

The Tinker thought, and says he: "I believe I'd like to be a young fellow again of eighteen, and back in the world roamin' it."

Death agreed. He made him a strapping, young fellow of eighteen and left him back in Ireland again. And, from that day to this, the Tinker of Tamlacht hasn't grown a day older than eighteen. And he's wandering Ireland 'round from end to wynd and from post to pillar wherever there is fun to be found.

He's at weddings and wakes and jolly christenings; and, if there's a fight in the fair, he's in the heart of it.

There's many's the man has met and chatted with the gay, young stranger in one end of Ireland or the other, and thought him brave company, and jolly; but it's seldom they suspect till long after that they have been chatting and drinking with the Tinker of Tamlacht.





## A GREAT INVENTION.

By TOM MASSON.

CLARA TIMERTON was a nice girl, but she had one fault. She was fickle. Her nature, with all the intensity and ardor of youth, refused, in some unaccountable manner, to remain steadfast. She was an intelligent, extremely pretty and amiable young girl, and exceedingly attractive. Young men were constantly falling in love with her, constantly being encouraged and, at the most unexpected moment, constantly being thrown over.

Clara was not a flirt, but her sudden distaste for the attentions of some young man to whom she had been violently attracted seemed constitutional. She could not help it, try how she would. It became proverbial in her circle that any young fellow who had the temerity to fall in love with her would, as sure as fate, be at last jilted.

Clara herself grew so morbid on the subject that she really disliked to meet any new young man, for very fear that they would be attracted toward each other, only with the invariable result.

All kinds of remedies were suggested. A course of treatment which would build up her nervous system—make her more phlegmatic, as it were—a long continental tour, a complete absence from society, et cetera.

But none of these produced any effect. It seemed her fate to be born constantly to meet young men whom she would love for a time with all her soul, and who would return her passion; that the engagement would be announced; indeed, in some cases, that the wedding-cards would be issued, and then, suddenly, that the whole affair would be called off, because she could not bring herself to it.

Matters were in this condition when the brilliant and now celebrated specialist on nervous diseases, Dr. Wader Chumberly returned from Germany, where he had been pursuing a series of original and startling investigations. With him on the steamer came Charlie Slater, a young man whose success in the bond department of a large Wall Street firm had been so phenomenal that his health broke down, and he had been obliged to resort to the usual European trip. He was now the picture of health.

It seemed inevitable that Charlie Slater and Clara Timerton should meet. And meet they did, one evening at a dance.

It is needless to say that they fell in love with each other at first sight.

Clara fled to her home, conscious of her new emotion; and Charlie, who knew but too well what his ultimate fate would be—for kind friends were not lacking to warn him—likewise went to his home, much distraught over his own hopeless condition.

What was to be done?

He loved this vivacious, genuine, fresh, young girl with an intensity that almost swept him off his feet. He was conscious that she loved him, by that wonderful look revealed in her eyes. It seemed as if indeed she must be his affinity. Yet the facts of her life confronted him. Others, like him, had gone through this same ordeal, and had come out—with broken hearts.

While he was sitting thus alone there was a knock at the door, and Doctor Chumberly entered. It was no uncommon thing for the doctor to come in at this late hour and have a pipe. Indeed, the two



friends had cemented the bond between them almost entirely in this manner.

For some time the doctor sat in silence, puffing his pipe, unwilling to disturb his friend's mood. Finally, however, he spoke.

"You have, then, met her?"

Charlie started up.

"How did you know that—what do you mean?" he asked.

"I am accustomed," said the doctor, "to analyzing the psychology of others, as you know. I was told where you had been. I knew that Miss Clara Timerton was there, also. I have heard the history of this remarkable young woman. And, in an imperfect manner perhaps, but nevertheless, more or less certainly, I am able to read your thoughts."

"This being the case," replied Charlie, gloomily, "there is no use for me to dilate upon my mood. I am, as you probably know, miserably unhappy. With youth and the certainty of a wealthy future on my side, I have met for the first time a young woman who I instinctively feel, although I have seen her only once, is the one best fitted to live my life with me. Yet, on the very threshold of this certainty, I am confronted by her history, and know that, after all, my love is a useless thing."

"Don't be so sure of that," replied the doctor, calmly. "I can cure her."

His friend jumped out of his chair, and confronted him eagerly.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Cure her? Is it possible? Is this, then, only a disease?"

The doctor relighted his pipe. "Sit down," he replied, "and I will explain. It matters not what love may be in its transcendent aspect, it is enough for us to say that it is governed by purely physiological laws. If in a man and a woman who are mutually attracted toward each other, we could classify the tremendous number of sensations that have made their impress upon the brain—I am speaking now in untechnical language, that you may follow me—and if at the same time we could determine the quality of the cellular structure that, in the beginning, each of them starts out with, we should be able to tell, by a series of profound calculations,

just why their attraction for each other exists."

"But what has this to do with my—with our case?"

"This is only a general statement leading up to it. What I want to impress upon you is that the brain is not only the seat of the mind, but also of that supposedly sentimental organ that is popularly termed the heart. All our actions can be traced to physical causes, and, farther than this, all our emotions, our so-called efforts of will, our intellectualities, can be traced to the brain. Whatever of soul a man may possess, we do not know. That is beyond us. But we do know that every action, every thought, has its physical reflex, or determinative sensation, although as yet we have not been able to trace the initial impulse that produces the first set of sensations. As far back as we go in our search for effects, we find some preceding cause, and thus our search seems endless."

"But how——"

"Listen. The tissue of the brain, or cortex, is in certain proportions a mass of ganglionic cells. These cells are like an infinite number of centers, and from each center there radiate what we may term arms, or, if you like, minutely thin threads, over which the electric currents go. When the brain, therefore, is alive and active, so to speak, these cells are full of energy, and their individual threads are distended, so that the threads of one cell are in touch with the threads of every other cell. We have, as the result of this normal condition of the brain, what we term contents of consciousness—that is to say, the stream of our thought remains unbroken. In the case of Miss Clara Timerton, certain portions of the cortex, in which are the seat of the emotions, are, for a certain length of time, abnormally active. This in time causes a reaction, so that what I might term a sudden disconnection of consciousness follows. Observe that the man she has loved is afterward never repugnant to her. That would be a sensation in itself. She is merely indifferent to him."

"What do you propose to do?"

"I have invented an apparatus—something on the principle of wireless telegraphy—which, when placed near enough to the subject, readjusts itself sympathetically



to the vibrations produced by the ganglionic cells of the brain. After this readjustment has taken place I set it in motion, and the vibrations it produces, being attuned to the subject, give a regular, normal, constant action of the ganglionic cells."

"So that Clara will not love me as intensely as I hope and believe she does now, but, on the other hand, her emotions will be unintermittent—no danger of their being suddenly cut off."

"Precisely. As long as the machine is near, you are safe."

"How much is one of these machines worth?"

"Five thousand dollars—with a set of ten lessons. This is the price to the trade. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded."

"That is to say——"

"That is to say, you needn't give me a check until the wedding-ceremony has been performed."

In his enthusiasm, Charlie allowed his meerschaum pipe to fall precipitately to the floor.

"Grand!" he exclaimed. "I'll start right in. I'll see Clara at once, explain the situation to her, put her under treatment immediately, and we'll be married in

a month. My dear friend, you are a benefactor of the race!"

"Don't mention it," said the great man, modestly.

One year had passed by. It was about ten o'clock in the morning of a bright summer day as an automobile puffed up to the office of Dr. Wader Chumberly, the celebrated electric specialist.

"Is the doctor in?"

"He is, sir."

The two friends once more stood face to face.

"Doctor," said Charlie Slater, "I've come on a matter of business. Do you know of any one who wants to buy one of those machines of yours, second-hand, at an absurdly low figure?"

The doctor regarded him with a look of concern.

"What!" he exclaimed. "You are not going to dispose of yours?"

"Yes."

"What for?"

His customer and friend regarded him with a look of mild and cynical amusement.

"My dear boy!" he exclaimed. "Haven't I been married a year? I don't need it any more."

## THE PURPLE ROSE.

BY ELSA BARKER.

ROSE of the purple petals, I would know  
The secret that has darkened every vein  
And fiber of thee. Was it the dull pain  
Of some strange passion in the long ago?  
Was there some boon the wind would not bestow?  
Some nightingale who never came again  
Into thy garden? Blossom, thou hast lain  
All night against the dark, in nameless woe.

Sister of mine, O Rose, I know thou art!  
As thus I hold thee with caressing hand,  
I feel thy being with perfume expand.  
I kiss thy quivering petals wide apart  
And lay my lips upon thy golden heart;  
For I perceive thy soul, and understand.





IT was in the waiting-room of the Byrd Street Station in Richmond that Basil Pomeroy first saw Cary. The day was a sticky, warm September day; and he was occupying three seats with his dress-suit case, his gun-case and rod and his own engaging person. Basil looked cheerful; he was cheerful, although the muggy air was destroying the starch in his last clean collar. He had had excellent sport with his Virginia friend; and he was going on to an important position in his little world at Harvard. His name had been high in the first ten of the Institute, last year, and he was business editor of the "Crimson"; he was a junior, a rank in undergraduate life giving one all the prestige of an upper classman, but lacking the faint shadow which approaching separation and tussle with the world fling over a man's last year. Content with himself and his world, Basil looked about the few fellow-journeyers in the station. On the bench before him sat a mother and son. The woman might have been forty, and was evidently a gentlewoman. She was slight, even fragile-looking. Her cheek was thin, and the paler because her eyelashes were so black and long; but her eyes themselves were a grayish-blue, very soft and lustrous. She was in deep mourning, but Basil, who was observant of details since he had taken to

writing stories for the monthly, did not feel sure that her carefully brushed black henrietta-cloth skirt, and India-silk shirt-waist with its sheer white cuffs and collar, and the black, draped bonnet, showed a recent bereavement; on the contrary, he fancied that it had been the wearer's state garb for more years than one.

One of the lady's hands wore a perfectly fitting but neatly darned black silk glove; the other hand was bare, and it was holding the hand of the young man. His speech showed him to be her son. He was a very big fellow (Basil's eyes widened over possible football material); he stooped a little as he sat; he had gray eyes with black lashes, and his fair skin was amazingly freckled. There was nothing of mark about him except his evident tenderness for the gentle little woman beside him. To the acute eye of a well-dressed man, his new suit had been bough' ready-made. He wore a crimson necktie, a ' a crimson band on his straw hat.

"Yes, ma'am, I've got them all," he was saying—"the very worst pair of overalls and a flannel shirt."

"Cousin Mary Page says"—the woman spoke rather slowly in the sweet little lingering cadences of Virginia—"she says that all the boys wear their old clothes 'Bloody Monday'; nothing will be thought



of it. You know how I feel; I want you to do like your mates and not shirk any danger, but you needn't be picking quarrels, honey; you're all I have"—she laughed, perhaps to hide a break in her voice—"and I'm mighty silly about my boy. I know your having so little money will keep you out of a great deal, for where you can't do your share you can't go in. But your grandfather and your father went to Harvard, and you're going, too. You will learn a heap, and while things may be hard and lonely the time will go——"

"They'll be harder and lonelier for you, that's the worst of it. I'll be so busy——"

"I'll be busy, too; there's a good chance for trade this year, you'll remember."

"To have to have you rent the plantation and take a cross-roads store!" began the young man, grinding his teeth.

She patted his shoulder. "Ally, don't take on about that now, honey. You'll find grandpa's sword in your trunk. It'll look nice on the wall of your room."

"Oh, mother! And you liked it so much! I wonder how many other things that I've no right to you've sneaked into my trunk."

She blushed and laughed happily. "Nothing of any use; just little things and—and—well, I've had your father's dress-suit made over for you in case you *should* need to go out in the evening. Now, Allerton, don't! Who worked in a lumber-mill all summer and——"

"I'd have been a yellow dog if I hadn't. I reckon I am, anyhow. I have taken Harvard; I'm letting you scrimp and pinch and pare, and rent the old place to strangers——"

"You hush! It's you' own money, dearie. You earned it yourself. And the little that isn't, you can pay back. Honey, I think the baggage-man is beckoning you."

She sent him away smiling, but when he was gone, her gray eyes followed his big, awkward form with an intensity of lonely misery which gave the watcher—whose mother was in Europe—an ache in the roof of his mouth. He took himself off, to give them their parting alone. At the car-window he looked back; and he flinched from her parting smile more than he would have flinched from tears. The

young man stood on the platform until the train pulled out of the station, waving his hand; to the end of the dwindling vista she was still smiling. But some twenty minutes later, when Basil looked up, the young man in the day-coach had suspiciously red eyelids. It was easy making his acquaintance; and he showed a flattering deference when he discovered the other's exalted station in the college world. Before they reached Washington, Basil had all his history. He was his mother's only child. His name was Allerton Cary. His grandfather was a Confederate general. His father, by simply heroic work, had saved the old family mansion and a hundred acres. He had made enough money to go to Harvard law-school, and his scholarship was a tradition in the family, as was his short but brilliant career as a lawyer. Had he lived, he would have left a fortune; but he died before his son was ten years old. The boy and the mother had had a struggle, which came out in hints rather than confessions.

Basil was a good-natured young man, eager to know his fellows of all kinds in college. In fact, he had set himself to be a man of wide acquaintance; he had made the Signet and the Dickey; and he meant, cheerfully, to be a leader. His new companion's artless admiration touched him. He managed to make his journey more comfortable in divers little ways, and when he discovered that Cary had engaged his room simply from an official document, choosing it entirely for its attractively low price, he bestirred himself to find him a better one as cheap. He would have given his good offices to help make the freshman football team; but Allerton declined.

"It's up to me to be a grind," said he. "I'd love it—Lord, how I'd love it!—but I simply can't spare the time. I've got to get through in three years, and I'm right stupid!"

Basil grew to like the boy; he made him free of his own luxurious rooms at Westmorley Court and of the genial company which solved the problems of the "little Harvarders" within them, and he suggested his name to Wynne when he gave his senior smoker to the freshmen. He walked Cary into the room and gave him the names and the strong right hands



of eight or nine fellows, before there had come too many guests for further introductions. Wynne, flustered and anxious, was finding seats and darting into his bedroom to investigate about the bottled beer and sandwiches which were to aid the university spirit later. The upper classmen invited lagged, only Basil having appeared. It afterward developed that there had been a mistake in the hour. Basil was greeted like Wynne's dearest ally.

"Have you brought your mandolin?" he whispered, hoarsely; and he almost groaned when Basil said that he hadn't. "Then, you've got to *talk*!" he asserted, with a lurid smile.

"Oh, I'll prattle," said Basil, easily. As good as his word, he sprawled before the fire (lighted for cheerfulness and as a good ashenbecker, although the weather needed it so little that all the windows were open to average the temperature), and demanded of the student world, "Say, who believes in ghosts?"

"I," came Cary's soft voice out of the silence which engulfed all the others. Having said, he flushed a little, but looked Wynne and Basil stoutly in the face.

"Ur—do *you*?" asked Wynne, turning a perplexed eye on Basil.

"I'm an inquirer." Basil threw his good-natured smile over the ranks. "A fellow that I know maintains, and lays money, that you can't find over a dozen people together, not related, that some one of them won't have a queer psychical story. So I thought I'd ask. Have you any special reason in the family for believing, Cary?"

Every one was looking at Cary, yet somehow Basil's flinging out his long arm and laying a friendly hand on the Southerner's knee robbed the moment of its terrors.

"Yes, sir, I reckon I have," said he, quietly.

"Do you mind telling us?" cried Wynne, with fervent interest. "Anything to promote conversation!"

"Guess I'd better start the beer," he murmured to Basil, "and the ginger ale, while he's telling us."

"If it'll ease your mind," returned Basil; "it isn't time, though."

Cary, timidly importuned by one or two of the freshmen, who had welcomed any

noise of talk, had begun to tell his tale, to which Basil, decanting the beer, paid but slight attention. Something there floated to him about a certain uncle or great-uncle of Cary's who lay all night in the snow after a battle, next to a wounded Yankee. And miles and miles away, Cary's grandmother, the soldier's sister, whom he loved dearly, was sleeping, ignorant of his peril. Of a sudden, she heard through the night the plunk of a horse's hoofs on the frozen ground. The old house was so solitary, guests were so beyond thinking, that she awakened and ran to the window. (Here Basil's attention went to the speaker.) She looked out of the window and saw Uncle Dave sitting on his horse, right straight and stiff, and looking at her. But when she saw him, she didn't cry out with joy like she'd have thought she would do; all at once she felt so terribly unhappy; it was like her heart had stopped beating. "Oh, Dave! Oh, Dave!" was all she could say. And the figure on the horse said, "Don't take on, sis, it was right easy; and the Yank, Tom Pelham, was mighty good to me." And then he didn't fade away, but he was just *gone*!

"And was he dead?" asked Basil.

"Yes, sir. The news came the day after, and Aunt Mildred got the mules hitched into the farm-wagon, with old Unk' Eben to drive 'em, and she rode on ahead. They traveled all day and all night, and they found him on the field, just as she expected, and she fetched him home and he's buried under the cedars on the old place. But it was a heap of comfort to Aunt Mildred to feel sure he hadn't suffered as he might have done, you know."

"How about Tom Pelham? Did he turn up and marry your aunt?" This came from the host, who was unbending in a measure of relief.

"Yes, sir," said Cary, soberly. "That is, he didn't marry Aunt Mildred, but we got word a month after from him. He wrote all about it, and how Uncle Dave was so brave and patient, and they helped each other, and almost the last words he said were: 'I've wanted so many times to go back to old Sycamore Hill! Now I'll go!' We never saw him, but we have always felt we wanted to. My grandmother



sent him a pig; it was all the pig she had, and mighty lucky to have it left; but he was in prison then, and he liked it mighty well."

"Got any more ghosts in your people?" said Basil.

"My great-grandmother saw my great-grandfather, they say, but I don't know about that."

But by this time the freshmen were aroused. A bold soul handed down a ghostly tale from his own family archives; several more furnished comments; the tongues began to ply from one occult subject to another; when the upper classmen invited appeared, they found every one talking at once, while the beer and ginger ale circulated briskly among the sandwiches. From ghosts the conversation drifted naturally into humor as a relief, and before the company separated, they were singing joyously in several keys.

Cary avowed that he had had a beautiful time. Basil meant to keep an eye on the boy, but there were many concerns demanding his eyes. Once in a while, he would go over to College House to see Cary. Once in a while, Cary's clumsy shoes trod carefully *between* Basil's dull-hued rugs and Cary's wistful eyes roamed about Basil's pictures. He never said much on these occasions, but he listened so eagerly that the junior rather missed his silent presence if the time of his absence was longer than usual. One way, he found Cary very disappointing; there was no helping him delicately to a share of the rich boy's luxuries. Invitations to lunch, to dine or to go to town he steadily declined, making no pretext, owning quite frankly that he did not accept because he could not return. Basil actually felt uncomfortable when he came to Cary's meager fire, and Cary would feed it quickly with lumps of coal. He could not resist a suspicion that the big Southerner sometimes went hungry and habitually was cold.

One day, he was visited by an inspiration. It sent him to Cary's room out of breath, with an enormous bundle. "I was going to pack these off home," he panted, mendaciously; "then it occurred to me you wouldn't mind storing them!" As he spoke, he was kicking out a rug and a thick wadded coverlet. Cary was un-

suspicious for once. But he protected both carefully with newspapers and laid them on his closet shelf, a sight which caused Basil to swear, a few days later. "Man alive, can't you stick that thing on your bed? It'll get crumpled and—and moth-eaten there in the closet," he exploded, kicking rug and coverlet out on the floor. Cary looked at him, and slowly a dull red mottled his freckled cheeks.

"You're right kind and good," said he, "but I'd rather keep them on the shelf." Then, as Basil looked hurt and made as if to pick them up and carry them off, "No, I won't," he cried, flinging his arm about Basil's neck; "you're the best friend I ev' did have, and I won't be biggity with you. I'll keep 'em anywhere you say."

In the expansion of the moment, he even smoked one of Basil's cigarettes; and they got better acquainted than in all the months before, in this half hour over the fire, which (to adorn the occasion) blazed with reckless profusion. There was no fire at all the next day when Basil fetched his alleged freshman's note-books—those neat typewritten note-books which one can buy in the Square. They were hardly so ancient and honorable as Basil would have had Cary believe. Cary, however, accepted them trustfully and with gratitude.

All this was before the Christmas holidays. Basil felt a twinge of remorse when he discovered on his return that Cary hadn't gone home. He hadn't thought to look him up before he went away to his own joyous home-coming.

"It was rather tough," Cary confessed; "but Mr. Wynne took me to Boston before he went home and I bought my mother a right pretty scarf and a Christmas card. He showed me the stores. And *she* sent me the bulliest box from home. I saved some of the pecan-nuts for you. And Professor Norton asked us all up Christmas eve. Oh, he's—he's a noble gentleman! It wasn't nearly so bad's I expected."

"Well, you have got to come to the theater with me to-night—and dine with me first," Basil insisted. "Wynne's coming, too. It's my Christmas treat."

Cary did come, and he had the time of his life. But the return home was not part of their festive plan. It barely escaped a





Drawn by George T. Tobin.

"'LIE STILL WHERE YOU ARE, GENTLEMEN!' HE CALLED, IN HIS SOFT, EVEN VOICE."



tragedy. They had taken a car of a different line from their custom, because they could get seats in it and all the other cars were packed.

This car ran through the crowded, narrow, ancient part of the town where shutters screen the narrow windows; and the old brick houses have pointed roofs and sagging door-jambs; and poignant odors float up through the iron gratings in the street, just outside basements of which half a door tops the pavement; and strange Chinese and Slavic names sprawl on the signs; and Hebrew junk-shops mix with mean saloons. So narrow were some of the streets that one could almost jump to the sidewalk from the car platform. Precisely this feat Cary did perform. For as they swung into a new and dingier and shabbier thoroughfare, a woman's shriek rent the street clatter; simultaneously, Basil and Cary beheld a disheveled, painted creature spring out of the shadow of the houses, followed by two men, one of whom caught and brutally choked her, whereupon the Southerner made his vault.

Instinctively the other students arose. Before the conductor could grumble his warning about the evil character of the street, they had passed to the platform.

"Send a policeman—if you can see one," called Basil, as he jumped off.

Although Wynne gave a throaty curse at "that infernal, hot-blooded Southerner who would get all their throats cut, and why the devil couldn't Basil let him get what was coming to him?" he stuck hard on his friend's heels just the same.

The two plunged into a disk of red light from a Christmas-decked liquor-dealer's window. Bathed in its glow, Cary was struggling with three men. Even as Basil's foot struck the pavement, one of the wrestlers flashed a knife. The next second, his arm crooked back with a sickening snap, and he was flung against the others. They went down in a heap. Cary's hand came out. A little trickle of light ran along his revolver barrel. "Lie still where you are, gentlemen!" he called, in his soft, even voice; he didn't even raise the tones. The woman, who had been flung aside, picked herself up to a kneeling posture—a strange and woful figure in her tawdry blue silk daubed by the filthy snow of the

pavement, her sham jewels flashing, and the blood from a blow on her head matting her yellow hair and smearing her ghastly, painted face. "Now put up you' hands!" said Cary, "or I'll plug you. You feller trying to help, I'll put one through your hat to show."

There was a sharp ping of a report on his words, and the dirty derby hat of a man on the sidewalk rolled off his head; the wearer sprinted round the corner.

"See?" said Cary—"I can kill the bunch of you befo' you can get you' guns out. Hands up! Now, gentlemen, you all shm you'selves; there's a pistol and knife on the sidewalk right handy. You all light out! Let the lady stay if she wants to."

But the woman was listening to one of the men. With the hysterical changeableness of her kind, she became appeased and ran away clinging to the ruffian who had choked her. Wynne and Basil had obeyed as if they had been prep. schoolboys. They stood in a formidable triangle, bristling with knives and pistols at the sullen faces in doorways and windows, until the bulky array of blue and brass on an approaching street-car indicated the entrance of the might of law.

They boarded the car. The police sergeant's rebukes for meddling in rackets on Friend Street they bore with most unaccustomed meekness, while Basil proffered the cigars of gratitude.

Afterward, when Wynne tried to explain to Cary the risk which chivalry ran in that quarter, Cary's only comment was:

"It's pretty awful, ain't it, to think of a white woman being like that!"

"Cary," said Basil, "you're mighty fresh in divers respects. In the language of the poet, 'You're a pore benighted heathen, but a fust-class fightin'-man!'" There was a gleam in his eye which warmed the simple young Southerner's heart for days.

Basil expected to see Cary the next day, and the same intention was in Wynne's mind; but it was now coming on to mid-years, and those who had frolicked in the sun were taking toll not only of the midnight hours but even of the futile pleasant daylight; so it was five days before Wynne, after a visit of his own, asked Basil if he had seen Cary lately. Basil replied: "Why,



yes. He came in for a minute Sunday night; but there was a mob in the room, and he only stayed a few minutes." He did not add the sentence on his tongue, "I had a notion he was rather upset."

"Well, I looked round this morning, but he wasn't in," said Wynne. "I threw my card in, with a few words on it, asking him to come over and we'd go to town together. But I haven't had an answer."

Basil proposed they go to 20 College House and bring him away captive. "He needs a little fun," he said. Secretly he thought, "And he needs some beefsteak!"

The two young men went over to College House. An indefinable uneasiness was growing on Basil. Wynne felt its contagion; therefore he whistled airs from "The Prince of Pilsen," out of tune. But neither voiced any feeling beyond a disgust at the snow crissing under their feet. Cary's door was shut. Wynne rapped on it smartly. The thud of his rap echoed through the hall, a dull and heavy sound. When he lifted the lid of the opening for letters, no welcome glow of firelight or of gas came to him, and as he bent his face to the opening the air of the room struck him with a chill. "Strike a match! Look inside," said Basil; unconsciously his voice was subdued as if in a sick-room. Wynne glued his eyes to the aperture. His report was made in the same hushed tone: "There are some letters on the floor—and my card."

"Can you see the bed? He can't be ill? Say, we've got to get in. Where's his goody?" The goody was found, a comely young colored woman, tidy, smiling and gently indifferent. She admitted them readily enough. The room was in perfect order; the bed had not been occupied. Wynne picked up the envelopes on the floor.

"Two notices from the office because he had been cutting," he commented; "my card, and a letter from some place in Virginia."

"It's from his mother," said Basil. He laid the envelope very gently on the table.

"I guess he's gone off on a little trip," suggested the bland goody.

"Without signing off? He is not that kind," snapped Basil.

Wynne, who had been looking in the closet, struck in:

"I don't believe he's taken a thing. His bag and his trunk are both here, and there's a dress-suit hanging up in the closet, and his old togs he wore Bloody Monday. His drawers haven't much in them; but I guess they've got all the poor fellow had. *He* hasn't gone away."

Basil asked the goody when she had seen Cary last; she couldn't rightly call it to mind. They left her with a caution to hold her peace.

Then, back in the street, they looked at each other.

"Almost anything at all may have happened to a fellow in Boston after twelve at night," growled Wynne, and began the gruesome adventure of a friend of his who had had his head broken just outside the South Station, and never knew who hit him.

"Cary never went to Boston," Basil cut him short. "The Port's just about as tough——"

"Where did Cary eat? Do you know? Not at Mem or Randall?"

"No; at 'most any old joint, where you can get hot dog for five cents."

They tried the eating-houses, getting no information. The next morning they went again to No. 20, finding it empty as before. Between examinations, they searched all day. By nightfall, two thoroughly alarmed young men came back to Cary's room with a detective and the proctor of the hall, who was a family friend of Basil's. The proctor had consented to allow a search before he informed the college authorities. The detective was a man of mark in his calling. His proceedings were after the accepted scientific manner. He examined every nook and corner of Cary's bare room, to find some clue to his vanishing. He ransacked the pockets of his clothes—so few clothes that there were not many pockets. He pulled out the contents of every pigeon-hole or drawer in his second-hand, rickety little desk. All that they found were notebooks kept with painstaking care; some shabby second-hand text-books; his few bills, all receipted and punctiliously docketed; a package of letters, the date on each, all in the same old-fashioned feminine hand and all marked with the same Virginia postmark; and another much slimmer package of notes and letters, each in its



envelope, marked with the writer's name and date, bearing such endorsements as: "From Cousin Sally Allerton," "From Uncle Tom Carroll," "From Cousin Tom Carroll," "From Miss Betty Manson" (this latter the detective's eye gleamed over until he read the cramped, unsteady characters and came on a sentence about the writer's rheumatism and her eighty-fifth birthday); "From Capt. Harold T. Comes, about the store rented to my mother;" there were also two cards scrawled over in a hand which Basil knew, and one plain card—all in an envelope marked "From Basil Pomeroy, Gentleman." That the boy should have kept these cards, moved Basil oddly. On the desk lay a small diary and an unfinished letter to his mother. When the detective took up the sheet, Basil would have interposed; he turned to the proctor with an irritable: "Has he got to read that!"

"I am afraid he has," returned the proctor, looking uncomfortable. "It may contain the clue we are after."

It did not; but when the man had finished it, he said thoughtfully to Basil: "Guess you're right about the boy; there are *some* dangerous possibilities we don't need to worry about. But there's no clue in the letter. How about this diary?" He ran over the leaves, but only to shake his head, saying: "Apparently contains information about the weather, his recitations, and Mr. Pomeroy, whom he seems to consider the greatest man in Harvard. And—wouldn't this kill you dead?—it's his expense account! Humph! he didn't pamper himself with high living, did he?"

The detective's finger ran down the page—"Fifteen cents, ten cents—here's a great spree, thirty-five cents a day for eating."

Basil ground his teeth. "I tried to help him, but he wouldn't let me. I know he half starved himself. I ought to have made him——"

"You couldn't," said the proctor, sighing; he was wondering within himself how many other poor students might be too proud to let those who were eager to help them discover their necessity.

"Here's the last entry in the diary," said the detective. "'Saturday, Jan. 3d.—Not much here to work on. Clear

and cool. Had exams in geology 4 and English A. Went to Boston and took supper at a very splendid hotel with Pomeroy and Mr. Wynne. It was a mighty good supper. Went to Keith's Theater afterwards. It is a right beautiful theater; all the passageways are made of marble and looking-glasses. There were some wonderful acrobats, and a beautiful dancer, and a magician from the royal court of Japan. There were some mighty silly niggers, too. I don't see how such a theater will pay such fellows. The best of all was the biograph where they make people in pictures act. I have often heard of these things, but this is the first time of my seeing them. I did wish mother was there.'"

"Poor lad!" said the proctor.

But Basil had an idea; he remembered the street-car incident which Cary did not mention, and gave it to the detective. "Mightn't those fellows have done something in revenge, maybe?"

The detective didn't seem greatly impressed. "Hardly likely," he said. "They've too much on their hands. Besides, we've been shadowing Wing Sin's house all the week; he has the Chinese laundry next the saloon and is one of the slickest fences in Boston. He married a white wife, and they've a lodging-house above, which is generally filled with yeggmen. The police suspect one of them of the Weathering murder. But they can't get any evidence. Wonder if the woman your friend rescued was Gladdy. Did she have yellow hair, curly, and a lot of it?"

"Yes," said Basil.

"That's poor Gladdy. She died the first of the week."

"Naturally?"

"Hard telling." The detective shrugged his shoulders. "There were no signs of violence, and she had heart-trouble for a long while. They *said* they found her dead in her bed. My own notion is, she knew too much. Well, we'll interview the chief about Wing Sin's, and see if anybody of your friend's description has been seen near there. But I don't think it likely. I'll report by to-morrow afternoon."

The report was made on time, but it contained absolutely nothing about Cary. No one in the least like him had been seen





*Drawn by George T. Tobin.*

"DON'T, PLEASE DON'T TELL MY MOTHER! THE—RED—BOOK—TABLE-DRAWER—"

on Friend Street. Nor was there any other clue. It seemed preposterous that a man could utterly disappear out of a populous university, leaving no trace behind him; but exactly this impossibility had happened. Reluctantly, Basil and Wynne admitted to the proctor the necessity for informing the college authorities; but Basil pleaded that

Cary's mother should not be told of his disappearance that day. He represented how little she could do to help them—nothing in all probability, and how difficult it would be for her narrow means to compass a journey to Cambridge.

"That will have to rest with the dean," said the proctor. "He may think that we



have no right to keep the information from her. The boy's her son, you know."

As the dean was dining out, Basil was obliged to leave for an appointment which he had in Boston at the detective's rooms, with no assurance on the subject. The hour was after seven in the evening, and the ground was covered with snow. The chill dreariness of the scene, recalling the discomforts of travel at such a season, increased the young fellow's appreciation of the cruelty of bringing a frail, lonely, frightened countrywoman on a hard and costly journey, to heartbreak at the end. The picture of her would not be ordered away; he saw her sitting all night in a grimy, suffocating day-coach amid sprawling sleepers, not able to afford even the poor privacy of a Pullman berth for her misery, because she must guard every cent to "help hunt for Ally."

Sometimes the little black-clad figure would turn its head to give him its pathetic, patient smile. Then Basil—whose mother was a gentle and little woman—would grind his teeth. And yet, hadn't she the right to be told? Her help seemed infinitely futile to him; but hadn't she the right to give it to her only son? He could not decide. Beset with doubts, he stared disconsolately out of his "booby" window. The runners churned through the snow and his horses' bells mocked him. He scowled on the scene which usually he dearly loved. Before him, the lights of Harvard Bridge spanned the frozen Charles. Huge broken fields of snow were marked out by irregular blue lines where the current had strained against its leash of ice and been smitten into deathly quiet. Far to his left, the long line of bunched stars faintly outlined the Cambridge flats. The great State House dome was sketched against the steel of the sky in dotted lines of fire, and below it rose lean rectangles of sky-scrapers and the solid blocks of Beacon Hill. After he had passed the bridge, he was whirled through by-streets where the snow had not been carted away, but flung from the sidewalks until it made ragged walls and buttresses on either hand. Lanes and wider streets ran away from the wider thoroughfare in dimly lighted curves, or climbed hills between mean, dark houses crowding close together as if for warmth in

the chill. Not a figure was to be seen traversing them. They were lonely beyond the loneliness of prairie or sea. Black shadows guarded their lurking doorways. It were easy to imagine an assassin fingering his knife in ambush at any basement.

All at once, without the warning of a thought, Basil saw under the light of the street-lamp a figure which he recognized with a thrill. He knew it before the light struck out Cary's face, white, drawn, pleading with an intolerable intensity of appeal. Basil leaned out of the door; they had passed the figure; he called on the cabman to stop. In the very utterance, his voice stuck in his throat with a gulp of horror, for there, in front of his path, was the figure again—and almost instantly gone. He hung out of the cab window, absolutely buffeted out of decision. Whether to turn back or go on, he was past resolving. And—lo! the figure, plainly marked, almost a block ahead of him, this time running toward him, both hands out and a breathless agony of struggle and entreaty on the haggard features.

And now the horses began to plunge and rear, evincing all the signs of terror. Why should the beasts be frightened on a smooth road, not even a street-car in sight? Why, unless they could see the tall runner drawing near, waving his hands, struggling to speak? The shape went by the carriage window—went by without a motion of a limb, as if borne on a myatical wind, which did not chill Basil's face nor lift a lock of hair, yet drove the miserable image of his friend past him.

The horses were plunging and rearing, grinding the runners into the snow-drifts, pushing them perilously sidewise over the slippery, trodden road. Afterward, Basil was aware of this; at the time, he could only feel his eyeballs strain to see more plainly that dim, struggling face, and his throat ached for dryness as he breathed the icy air in gulps. In a second, the figure which he had lost for a moment returned, and kept pace with the gyrations of the "booby" for perhaps two minutes. All the time, Basil was conscious of an effort on the apparition's part to speak; until, at last, the words came in gasps, as from a spent runner:

"Don't, *please* don't tell my mother!



The—red—book—table-drawer——” But the last word faded, and the face went with it into emptiness. The “booby” was going more smoothly, and there was nothing to the right or the left that Basil could see when he leaned out of the window. All he could hear was the creak of the runners on the snow and the coachman’s injured plaint: “Now, whatever d’ye suppose made them cussed horses so scared?”

Basil moistened his dry lips with his tongue. It barely served him to ask, “Did you see anything, Dennis?”

“I did not, sor,” cried Dennis. “They’re quiet now, sor.”

The horses were trembling, but again obedient to the reins. Basil leaned back, thought differently of his purpose, put his head out of the window again: “Go back, Dennis. I’ve forgotten something. Go to College House.”

His head was whirling; his heart felt heavy and cold, like a lump of ice in his breast. But he was no longer undecided. The goody admitted the young man to Cary’s room and pocketed her dollar, without question.

Cary’s room was bare, and dark, and cold with a chill that crept round Basil’s heart. He lighted the gas; and the sense of the lad’s struggle which he had lightened so little, and the lad’s gratitude for that trivial help, grew heavier as he searched. There was no red book, no book at all, in the table-drawer. Perhaps before the ransacking by the police there might have been such a book; now the drawer gaped at Basil, empty to its corners.

“Nothing for it but to look over every red book in the room,” Basil grunted, setting his lips. There were four red books visible. Three of them were text-books: an old Horace which had descended from one student to another by way of the Harvard Cooperative Society, a work on geology and a very shabby rhetoric. The fourth book was a blank-book in which Cary had written his theme in English A. But a minute examination satisfied Basil that he had written nothing else. Here were all the books. Not one held any light. Yet Basil was unshaken in his belief that there was some light somewhere

in them. “I’ll look at every page in every one,” he said, doggedly. “Poor Cary sha’n’t have me fail him now.”

He began with Horace, turning every leaf. The action was mechanical until, midway in the book, between two pages, his fingers slipped on paper of quite a different texture—a thin, thin sheet of note-paper. Basil held it to the light. It was covered with writing addressed to himself. His heart beat fast, and his eyes blurred as he drove them down the lines. But he read every word, after which he folded the paper carefully and sought the proctor.

“You have found something?” said the proctor, instantly.

“I think I have,” said Basil. “You remember Gay?” (Gay was the Boston expert on crime) “said the woman Gladdy could tell too much.”

“Yes.”

“Well, I think I know one big thing she could tell.”

“What?”

“She could tell about the Weathering murder.”

“The Weathering murder,” repeated the proctor, instantly on the alert. Since the detective’s hint, he had been reading the papers which were giving the crime their blackest headlines.

Weathering had been a rich man who had a fad for collecting jewels. His rubies and alexandrites and diamonds and sapphires were so wonderful that their fame had escaped into the magazines. Six weeks before, he had been found dead in his bedroom in a fashionable apartment-house, with a single, well-aimed knife-thrust in his heart. There was no clue to the murderer. The jewels were gone. After a month, an Italian, from Wing Sin’s, who bore an ugly reputation as a bravo and general cut-throat, was arrested on no better evidence than his presence in the apartment-house earlier in the evening, and his later endeavor to persuade the janitor to conceal that he had been there. This man’s preliminary trial before the grand jury was now in progress.

“How do you know anything about the Weathering murder?” said the proctor.

In answer, Basil handed him the sheet of paper. He read:—



"Sunday evening.

"DEAR POMEROY:

"You are the best friend I have, and you know all about things, too; so I thought I would ask your advice. I don't exactly know what to do. This afternoon a queer thing happened. I was going to the Coop. when a girl whom I had never seen (she didn't look like a young lady, although she had on fine clothing) stepped up to me and asked was I the man who owned that letter and who helped a lady near the North Station, yesterday, who was being choked by a man. She had a letter addressed to me from my mother which I reckon I must have dropped in that fight yesterday night. I said I was.

" 'Then, this is for you, too,' said she. 'Read it and give it back to me.' She handed me a note, with which I thought I ought to do as she asked, since it concerned a woman; and after I read it, I did give it back to her. But I remember every word. This is about how it went: 'If you want to find out all about the Weathering murder and get the reward, be at Harvard Sq. at nine o'clock to-night, and follow any one with a red feather in her hat. You can't find nothing if you split to the cops.' It wasn't signed, and it wasn't very well spelled or written. The girl looked at me and seemed to guess my doubts of the writer, for she assured me mighty earnestly that poor Gladdy was all right and had been treated bad enough to drive anybody crazy; and she was in fear of her life, so she was. I don't quite know what to do. There is a reward of five thousand dollars offered by Weathering's brother, and a thousand more by the city. When I think of what my mother and I could do with *half* that money, I get the quivers all over. On the other hand, it may be a trap. I thought I'd ask your advice, and I'm going over to see you, and if there's nobody there I'll put the case to you. If you have a lot of friends, maybe I'll leave this. But you understand *one* thing, I'm not going to have you or Mr. Wynne mixed up in this. It's my job. But you can tell me how I can get the police handy. And if anything should happen to me, you tell my mother. And you tell her I don't believe my father

would be ashamed of me at Harvard, though I didn't get any better than one A and one B in the hour exams and I am afraid I sha'n't get more than C in the mid-years.

"I can't tell you how kind you've been to me, Pomeroy. I believe if I——"

Here the writing abruptly ceased. Some curious instinct, premonition—call it what one will—had compelled Cary to write the letter; but apparently it had not been strong enough to make him finish it and carry it with him when he went to Basil, or to impel him to confide in Basil when he found the occasion unpropitious.

The proctor frowned. "This looks ugly," he said. "He must have gone from your room and on some impulse gone straight into Boston. Either the letter was a bait to a trap, or the writer was discovered with Cary, and what happened we can't tell. He may be a prisoner or he may be dead. I am afraid we *have* to tell his mother."

"Wouldn't we better—couldn't you wait until we give this last clue to the police?" pleaded Basil. "I've an appointment now." He would do as Cary had asked him, whatever the request; he clung to that task doggedly; he would not think beyond it. After a little hesitation on the proctor's part, he won his point and set out again for Boston.

He was dully amazed at his own emotion. "It isn't as if I were fond of the fellow," he kept telling himself. "It's just the darn pathos of the situation!" After a while, he found himself saying: "He put up such a sandy fight! You *have* to like a fellow who puts up a fight like that!" And later: "I believe he'd have done more for me than any fellow here! And he had awful soft, pleasant ways. Maybe I could have persuaded him, now my roommate's gone, to take the other room—oh, Lord!"—he stifled a kind of groan—"was it his ghost? Did he die just then?—or was it before? And why should he insist on not telling his mother—unless to save her the journey? Oh, isn't it a mess? Confound Wynne for going to his aunt's dinner to-day!"

He had resolved not to tell the detective his reason for hunting; he let the discovery appear an accident, and grimly relished the



man of skill's suppressed mortification at overlooking such a clue.

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings——" The detective comforted himself with Scripture. "Well, I wasn't any stupider than Captain Riley's men who have been on watch all the week and let a fellow six feet one walk into the house without their twigging him. Poor Gladdy, I guess she was murdered all right. She sent the note. She quarreled once too often with Stumpy Pete. When she'd get mad after a licking, she'd threaten him, but they always made up; so we never got a hold on him. He's a yegg-man and very clever. Her death—I've looked it up since I saw you—was reported Sunday night. She may have been dead when he got to the house. Well——"

"Can't we pull the house?" said Basil.

"We just will. And to-night." He was at his desk and he took up the telephone. There was a short but decisive colloquy, ending in the summons of a cab. But, to Basil's angry disappointment, the detective primly declined his company. No persuasions moved him out of his argument: "I couldn't answer to your father and mother, young gentleman, should any harm come to you. You can trust me. I'll do the right thing."

Basil's eloquence, his anger, his covert bribes, availed as much as surf avails to move a boulder, and no more. The end was, the young fellow drew himself up very stiffly. "Then good-evening, Mr. Gay," he said, and marched out of the room. The detective chuckled. He felt less like chuckling when the first face he perceived among the policemen in front of Wing Sin's was that of the stubborn young Harvard man; but he was magnanimous enough to proffer his own revolver.

"You forget I captured a gun in this street last Saturday," said Basil, with a faint smile. But his little victory could not lift the dread of what spectacle he might find; and his pulse thumped furiously when the police captain rattled the brass knocker on the dingy white hall-door, demanding admission in the name of the law. Entrance was accorded him civilly enough by a slatternly drudge who trembled away from the dark hall the instant she had slipped the bolts.

As they stood, uncertain, a black-haired woman showed her pink cheeks and white feather boa through a foot of doorway in reconnaissance; she was the reputed keeper of the "lodging-house," the Chinaman's wife. She professed indignant surprise. Few words were wasted on her by the captain. And Basil had occasion to admire the rapidity of his progress, as well as the ease with which he brushed aside specious pleas which might have barred doors. His men hunted the house through in an amazingly short period, finding no one, however.

Basil was permitted to go into each room in turn, but he found no sign of Cary's presence. Once, looking out of the window, he saw two sullen men standing, bareheaded and with torn clothing, on the trampled snow, and their faces seemed familiar to him. They must have tried to escape and tumbled into the net spread for them.

The house sickened him. The main room, where he stood at last, reeked with the rank odors of liquor and stale tobacco-smoke. The curtains were dingy; the ingrain carpet was stained and torn; the sofa and chairs were an ill-assorted lot, some pieces in ragged cane and dirty satin. On the table, the tinsel-embroidered cover had been pulled askew, scattering a pack of cards over a tray which had contained a meal, and overturning a claret bottle. It lay on its side and dripped hideously on the crust of bread, and an egg which some reckless heel had ground into the dreadful carpet. A rickety cabinet-organ stood against the wall. The room gave on a squalid court. One could not imagine a drearier or more repulsive place; yet this was the third time Basil had returned to it, each time with a singular sensation of being dragged. He suddenly surrendered to his impulse.

"Cary!" he yelled at the top of his voice, "I found the book; I'm here. Dead or alive, signal to me!"

The policemen stood around staring; it was only Basil who detected the faintest tap on the wall. The captain looked puzzled. "Same distance between the partition and the house walls, ain't there?" he asked; then, receiving an affirmative, he gave a sharp nod of his head and ran



out of the room. In a second he was back, grimly smiling. "There is a jog in the wall. Blind pig, by ——!"

And he instantly lent his shoulder to Basil, who was tugging at the organ. They moved aside the instrument. They tore down the new wainscoting behind it without hesitation. There was revealed a low door bolted with a heavy iron bolt, working on their side. It flew back, but still the door held, until Basil and the captain and the detective together broke it down. As the door flew back, Basil recoiled, white and sick, and shut his eyes. Something leaped through the opening and flung itself on him and hugged him.

"Hello!" observed Gay, "are you the missing man?"

Basil looked into the face before him. It was pale and haggard and thin, but it was Allerton Cary's living face.

"I reckon," said Cary. "Say, in that closet is all the Weathering jewelry. Has anybody got *anything* to eat?"

Later, in Pomeroy's study, with Wynne doing wonders over a chafing-dish, warmed and fed, Cary told his tale. He did not consider it remarkable, and was chiefly concerned lest he had violated the college rules.

"You see," he said, "that poor woman didn't trick me. She meant to give them up. That brute behaved shamefully, ran off with another woman. He really was the one who stabbed Weathering, though the man they've got let him in. I don't know what they'd done to the poor creature, but she was all by her lone when I got there. There was a queer-looking woman let me in and let me go up to her. She was lying on a lounge or a sofa in that room where you found me; they hadn't even put her to bed. She told me something about the murder—enough, I reckon, to hang the two villains. And then she got faint; I expect she died, poor thing. I looked around for some water or some wine or some stimulant; and I saw a young woman with red cheeks, right pretty-looking. I called to her. She showed me this closet; it wasn't boarded up then, and there wasn't any organ before it, only a chair; and she said I'd find a bottle and

glasses on the shelf. I was so stupid and so anxious to help the poor woman that I never suspected a thing; I ran right in; and she slammed the door on me. The door had a spring-bolt; it shot and held the door fast. Well, I strained it pretty well before they could get that organ and those iron bars across. But they got 'em all right and then I never did move it!"

"And you stayed in that hideous place since Sunday?" cried Wynne. "Had you any air? Or anything to eat or drink?"

"Not too much air," said Cary, with a grimace. "I made a hole in the plaster and got into the air space beneath the walls and struck a crack somehow; so I got *some*. I didn't have anything to eat except half a box of water-crackers and a bottle of olives; but I had a whole case of some kind of fizzy water, with a thing hanging to the neck of one of the bottles that opened it. I'd a fine time after I found that little trick. Before, I had to break the necks of the bottles, and I was always afraid of swallowing glass. There was some whisky there, too, but I let it alone. I promised an old great-aunt of mine that I wouldn't drink any liquor in my freshman year; so I didn't."

"But I should think you would have gone crazy," cried Wynne, "all in the dark, half starved!"

"Yes, sir, I felt mighty bad," Cary admitted; "but at first I was always expecting them all to come in and try to kill me. Then I'd had a chance to fight, for I was ahmed of course. But I reckon they 'lowed I'd die there all right if they let me 'lone, and I wouldn't be marked up then. They could just chuck me out in the street and leave me anywhere. I figured it all out after a spell."

"Cheerful time you must have had in the dark with those fancies!" said Basil.

"Well, I had my match-case, you know, with six matches in it. I used them to explore with. That's how I found the jewelry. That cheered me up right smart."

"But weren't you cold?" said Basil, instantly replenishing the fire.

"Pretty cold," laughed Cary, "and I got pretty stiff sleeping on the floor. I tell you, I thought mighty often of that comforter you lent me. It was right bad,





*Drawn by George T. Tobin.*

"AS THE DOOR FLEW BACK, BASIL RECOILED, WHITE AND SICK, AND SHUT HIS EYES."



too, thinking of how I would keep cutting and cutting; and maybe they'd send me a notice from the office, and the exams would be coming on and they might expel me—oh, I used not to be cold then, I assure you. But the worst of all was—my mother. She wouldn't get my Sunday letter and she'd worry. First, she'd write to me; next, she'd write maybe to Pomeroy; she wouldn't know where to write. It isn't like it is down South; here, people are so busy; and she knows it, and she'd hate so to bother. I'd get about crazy when I thought those things. I suppose I did get a little crazy. I began to determine to escape—one way, if I couldn't another. I know those Indian fellows could do it—why not I? I would sit as still and think one thing: how to get out—*how* to get out. I knew if I could only get to Pomeroy, he'd find a way to help me"—he

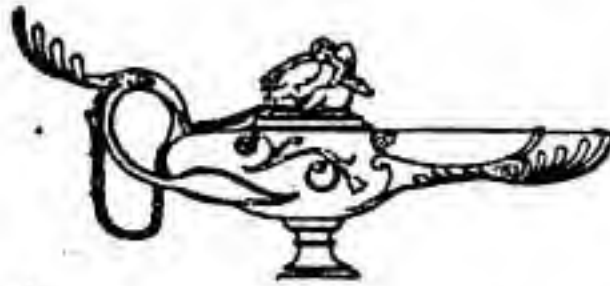
looked shyly at Basil—"and you see he did!"

"Have some more of the soup, old chap," said Basil.

"At last, I did get out. I found him; I tried so hard. I thought it would kill me to speak; but I spoke, just a little. And then I was back, here. I felt so bad, I—I cried."

"Plainly," said Basil, "you need to be under surveillance; I shall ask the dean to sentence you to be my room-mate the rest of the year, so I can take care of you and keep you from any more wild adventures and turning yourself into spooks."

"Oh"—Cary was stammering—"but it would be nice to stay here to-night! And that's your bathroom? I've been bathing in seltzer lately. But first I've got to finish that letter to my mother. I want to post it to-night."



## WHATEVER IS.

BY CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN.

WHATEVER is we only know  
As in our minds we find it so;  
No staring fact is half so clear  
As one dim, preconceived idea—  
No matter how the fact may glow.

Vainly may Truth her trumpet blow  
To stir our minds; like heavy dough  
They stick to what they think—won't hear  
Whatever is.

Our ancient myths in solid row  
Stand up—we simply have to go  
And choke each fiction old and dear  
Before the modest facts appear;  
Then we may grasp, reluctant, slow,  
Whatever is.





# THE GHOST-EXTINGUISHER

By Gelett Burgess

I happened to notice that the Japanese have no objections to spooks. Now, whenever I have such a building to rent, I let it to Japs at a nominal figure, and after they've taken the curse off, I raise the rent, the Japs move out, the place is renovated, and in the market again."

The subject interested me, for I am not only a scientist, but a speculative philosopher as well. The investigation of those phenomena that lie upon the threshold of the great unknown has always been my favorite field of research. I believed, even then, that the Oriental mind, working along different lines than those which we pursue, has attained knowledge that we

know little of. Thinking, therefore, that these Japs might have some secret inherited from their misty past, I examined into the matter.

MY attention was first called to the possibility of manufacturing a practicable ghost-extinguisher by a real-estate agent in San Francisco.

"There's one thing," he said, "that affects city property here in a curious way. You know we have a good many murders, and, as a consequence, certain houses attain a very sensational and undesirable reputation. These houses it is almost impossible to let; you can scarcely get a decent family to occupy them rent-free. Then we have a great many places said to be haunted. These were dead timber on my hands until

I shall not trouble you with a narration of the incidents which led up to my acquaintance with Hoku Yamanochi. Suffice it to say that I found in him a friend who was willing to share with me his whole lore of quasi-science. I call it this advisedly, for science, as we Occidentals use the term, has to do only with the laws of matter and sensation; our scientific men, in fact, recognize the existence of nothing else. The Buddhist philosophy, however, goes further.

According to its theories, the soul is sevenfold, consisting of different shells or envelopes—something like an onion—



which are shed as life passes from the material to the spiritual state. The first, or lowest, of these is the corporeal body, which, after death, decays and perishes. Next comes the vital principle, which, departing from the body, dissipates itself like an odor, and is lost. Less gross than this is the astral body, which, although immaterial, yet lies near to the consistency of matter. This astral shape, released from the body at death, remains for a while in its earthly environment, still preserving more or less definitely the imprint of the form which it inhabited.

It is this relic of a past material personality, this outworn shell, that appears, when galvanized into an appearance of life, partly materialized, as a ghost. It is not the soul that returns, for the soul, which is immortal, is composed of the four higher spiritual essences that surround the ego, and are carried on into the next life. These astral bodies, therefore, fail to terrify the Buddhists, who know them only as shadows, with no real volition. The Japs, in point of fact, have learned how to exterminate them.

There is a certain powder, Hoku informed me, which, when burnt in their presence, transforms them from the rarefied, or semi-spiritual, condition to the state of matter. The ghost, so to speak, is precipitated into and becomes a material shape which can easily be disposed of. In this state it is confined and allowed to disintegrate slowly where it can cause no further annoyance.

This long-winded explanation piqued my curiosity, which was not to be satisfied until I had seen the Japanese method applied. It was not long before I had an opportunity. A particularly revolting murder having been committed in San Francisco, my friend Hoku Yamanochi applied for the house, and, after the police had finished their examination, he was permitted to occupy it for a half-year at the ridiculous price of three dollars a month. He invited me to share his quarters, which were large and luxuriously furnished.

For a week, nothing abnormal occurred. Then, one night, I was awa-

kened by terrifying groans, followed by a blood-curdling shriek which seemed to emerge from a large closet in my room, the scene of the late atrocity. I confess that I had all the covers pulled over my head and was shivering with horror when my Japanese friend entered, wearing a pair of flowered-silk pajamas. Hearing his voice, I peeped forth, to see him smiling reassuringly.

"You some kind of very foolish fellow," he said. "I show you how to fix him!"

He took from his pocket three conical red pastils, placed them upon a saucer and lighted them. Then, holding the fuming dish in one outstretched hand, he walked to the closed door and opened it. The shrieks burst out afresh, and, as I recalled the appalling details of the scene which had occurred in this very room only five weeks ago, I shuddered at his temerity. But he was quite calm.

Soon, I saw the wraithlike form of the recent victim dart from the closet. She crawled under my bed and ran about the room, endeavoring to escape, but was pursued by Hoku, who waved his smoking plate with indefatigable patience and dexterity.

At last he had her cornered, and the specter was caught behind a curtain of odorous fumes. Slowly the figure grew more distinct, assuming the consistency of a heavy vapor, shrinking somewhat in the operation. Hoku now hurriedly turned to me.

"You hully up, bling me one pair bellows pletty quick!" he commanded.

I ran into his room and brought the bellows from his fireplace. These he pressed flat, and then carefully inserting one toe of the ghost into the nozzle and opening the handles steadily, he sucked in a portion of the unfortunate woman's anatomy, and dexterously squirted the vapor into a large jar, which had been placed in the room for the purpose. Two more operations were necessary to withdraw the fantom completely from the corner and empty it into the jar. At last the transfer was effected and the receptacle securely stoppered and sealed.

"In formeryore-time," Hoku explained





*Drawn by George T. Tobin*

"The cut was piled full of frenzied, scrambling specters, as rank after rank swept down into the horrid gut"



to me, "old pliests sucked ghost with mouth and spit him to inside of vase with acculacy. Modern-time method more better for stomach and epiglottis."

"How long will this ghost keep?" I inquired.

"Oh, about four, five hundled years, maybe," was his reply. "Ghost now change from spilit to matter, and comes under legality of matter as usual science."

"What are you going to do with her?" I asked.

"Send him to Buddhist temple in Japan. Old pliest use him for high celemony," was the answer.

My next desire was to obtain some of Hoku Yamanochi's ghost-powder and analyze it. For a while it defied my attempts, but, after many months of patient research, I discovered that it could be produced, in all its essential qualities, by means of a fusion of formaldehyde and hypofenyltrybrompropionic acid in an electrified vacuum. With this product I began a series of interesting experiments.

As it became necessary for me to discover the habitat of ghosts in considerable numbers, I joined the American Society for Psychical Research, thus securing desirable information in regard to haunted houses. These I visited persistently, until my powder was perfected and had been proved efficacious for the capture of any ordinary house-broken phantom. For a while I contented myself with the mere sterilization of these specters, but, as I became surer of success, I began to attempt the transfer of ghosts to receptacles wherein they could be transported and studied at my leisure, classified and preserved for future reference.

Hoku's bellows I soon discarded in favor of a large-sized bicycle-pump, and eventually I had constructed one of my own, of a pattern which enabled me to inhale an entire ghost at a single stroke. With this powerful instrument I was able to compress even an adult life-sized ghost into a two-quart bottle, in the neck of which a sensitive valve (patented) prevented the specter from emerging during process.

My invention was not yet, however,

quite satisfactory. While I had no trouble in securing ghosts of recent creation—spirits, that is, who were yet of almost the consistency of matter—on several of my trips abroad in search of material I found in old manor-houses or ruined castles many specters so ancient that they had become highly rarefied and tenuous, being at times scarcely visible to the naked eye. Such elusive spirits are able to pass through walls and elude pursuit with ease. It became necessary for me to obtain some instrument by which their capture could be conveniently effected.

The ordinary fire-extinguisher of commerce gave me the hint as to how the problem could be solved. One of these portable hand-instruments I filled with the proper chemicals. When inverted, the ingredients were commingled in vacuo and a vast volume of gas was liberated. This was collected in the reservoir provided with a rubber tube having a nozzle at the end. The whole apparatus being strapped upon my back, I was enabled to direct a stream of powerful precipitating gas in any desired direction, the flow being under control through the agency of a small stop-cock. By means of this ghost-extinguisher I was enabled to pursue my experiments as far as I desired.

So far my investigations had been purely scientific, but before long the commercial value of my discovery began to interest me. The ruinous effects of spectral visitations upon real estate induced me to realize some pecuniary reward from my ghost-extinguisher, and I began to advertise my business. By degrees, I became known as an expert in my original line, and my professional services were sought with as much confidence as those of a veterinary surgeon. I manufactured the Gerrish Ghost-Extinguisher in several sizes, and put it on the market, following this venture with the introduction of my justly celebrated Gerrish Ghost-Grenades. These hand-implements were made to be kept in racks conveniently distributed in country houses for cases of sudden emergency. A single grenade, hurled at any spectral form, would, in breaking,





*Drawn by George T. Tobin*

**"I fled, but Napoleon's men fled with me"**



liberate enough formaldehydrom to coagulate the most perverse spirit, and the resulting vapor could easily be removed from the room by a housemaid with a common broom.

This branch of my business, however, never proved profitable, for the appearance of ghosts, especially in the United States, is seldom anticipated. Had it been possible for me to invent a preventive as well as a remedy, I might now be a millionaire; but there are limits even to modern science.

Having exhausted the field at home, I visited England in the hope of securing customers among the country families there. To my surprise, I discovered that the possession of a family specter was considered as a permanent improvement to the property, and my offers of service in ridding houses of ghostly tenants awakened the liveliest resentment. As a layer of ghosts I was much lower in the social scale than a layer of carpets.

Disappointed and discouraged, I returned home to make a further study of the opportunities of my invention. I had, it seemed, exhausted the possibilities of the use of unwelcome fantoms. Could I not, I thought, derive a revenue from the traffic in desirable specters? I decided to renew my investigations.

The nebulous spirits preserved in my laboratory, which I had graded and classified, were, you will remember, in a state of suspended animation. They were, virtually, embalmed apparitions, their inevitable decay delayed, rather than prevented. The assorted ghosts that I had now preserved in hermetically sealed tins were thus in a state of unstable equilibrium. The tins once opened and the vapor allowed to dissipate, the original astral body would in time be reconstructed and the warmed-over specter would continue its previous career. But this process, when naturally performed, took years. The interval was quite too long for the fantom to be handled in any commercial way. My problem was, therefore, to produce from my tinned Essence of Ghost a specter that was capable of immediately going

into business and that could haunt a house while you wait.

It was not until radium was discovered that I approached the solution of my great problem, and even then months of indefatigable labor were necessary before the process was perfected. It has now been well demonstrated that the emanations of radiant energy sent forth by this surprising element defy our former scientific conceptions of the constitution of matter. It was for me to prove that the vibratory activity of radium (whose amplitudes and intensity are undoubtedly four-dimensional) effects a sort of allotropic modification in the particles of that imponderable ether which seems to lie half-way between matter and pure spirit. This is as far as I need to go in my explanation, for a full discussion involves the use of quaternions and the method of least squares. It will be sufficient for the layman to know that my preserved fantoms, rendered radio-active, would, upon contact with the air, resume their spectral shape.

The possible extension of my business now was enormous, limited only by the difficulty in collecting the necessary stock. It was by this time almost as difficult to get ghosts as it was to get radium. Finding that a part of my stock had spoiled, I was now possessed of only a few dozen cans of apparitions, many of these being of inferior quality. I immediately set about replenishing my raw material. It was not enough for me to pick up a ghost here and there, as one might get old mahogany; I determined to procure my fantoms in wholesale lots.

Accident favored my design. In an old volume of "Blackwood's Magazine" I happened, one day, to come across an interesting article upon the battle of Waterloo. It mentioned, incidentally, a legend to the effect that every year, upon the anniversary of the celebrated victory, spectral squadrons had been seen by the peasants charging battalions of ghostly grenadiers. Here was my opportunity.

I made elaborate preparations for the capture of this job-lot of fantoms upon



the next anniversary of the fight. Hard by the fatal ditch which engulfed Napoleon's cavalry I stationed a corps of able assistants provided with rapid-fire extinguishers ready to enfilade the famous sunken road. I stationed myself with a No. 4 model magazine-hose, with a four-inch nozzle, directly in the path which I knew would be taken by the advancing squadron.

It was a fine, clear night, lighted, at first, by a slice of new moon; but later, dark, except for the pale illumination of the stars. I have seen many ghosts in my time—ghosts in garden and garret, at noon, at dusk, at dawn, fantoms fanciful, and specters sad and spectacular—but never have I seen such an impressive sight as this nocturnal charge of cuirassiers, galloping in goblin glory to their time-honored doom. From afar the French reserves presented the appearance of a nebulous mass, like a low-lying cloud or fog-bank, faintly luminous, shot with fluorescent gleams. As the squadron drew nearer in its desperate charge, the separate forms of the troopers shaped themselves, and the galloping guardsmen grew ghastly with supernatural splendor.

Although I knew them to be immaterial and without mass or weight, I was terrified at their approach, fearing to be swept under the hoofs of the nightmares they rode. Like one in a dream, I started to run, but in another instant they were upon me, and I turned on my stream of formaldehydrom. Then I was overwhelmed in a cloud-burst of wild warlike wraiths.

The column swept past me, over the bank, plunging to its historic fate. The cut was piled full of frenzied, scrambling specters, as rank after rank swept down into the horrid gut. At last the ditch swarmed full of writhing forms and the carnage was dire.

My assistants with the extinguishers stood firm, and although almost unnerved by the sight, they summoned their courage, and directed simultaneous streams of formaldehydrom into the struggling mass of fantoms. As soon as my mind returned, I busied myself with the huge tanks I had prepared for use

as receivers. These were fitted with a mechanism similar to that employed in portable forges, by which the heavy vapor was sucked off. Luckily the night was calm, and I was enabled to fill a dozen cylinders with the precipitated ghosts. The segregation of individual forms was, of course, impossible, so that men and horses were mingled in a horrible mixture of fricasseed spirits. I intended subsequently to empty the soup into a large reservoir and allow the separate specters to reform according to the laws of spiritual cohesion.

Circumstances, however, prevented my ever accomplishing this result. I returned home, to find awaiting me an order so large and important that I had no time in which to operate upon my cylinders of cavalry.

My patron was the proprietor of a new sanatorium for nervous invalids, located near some medicinal springs in the Catskills. His building was unfortunately located, having been built upon the site of a once-famous summer-hotel, which, while filled with guests, had burnt to the ground, scores of lives having been lost. Just before the patients were to be installed in the new structure, it was found that the place was haunted by the victims of the conflagration to a degree that rendered it inconvenient as a health-resort. My professional services were requested, therefore, to render the building a fitting abode for convalescents. I wrote to the proprietor, fixing my charge at five thousand dollars. As my usual rate was one hundred dollars per ghost, and over a hundred lives were lost at the fire, I considered this price reasonable, and my offer was accepted.

The sanatorium job was finished in a week. I secured one hundred and two superior spectral specimens, and upon my return to the laboratory, put them up in heavily embossed tins with attractive labels in colors.

My delight at the outcome of this business was, however, soon transformed to anger and indignation. The proprietor of the health-resort, having found that the specters from his place had



been sold, claimed a rebate upon the contract price equal to the value of the modified ghosts transferred to my possession. This, of course, I could not allow. I wrote, demanding immediate payment according to our agreement, and this was peremptorily refused. The manager's letter was insulting in the extreme. The Pied Piper of Hamelin was not worse treated than I felt myself to be; so, like the piper, I determined to have my revenge.

I got out the twelve tanks of Waterloo ghost-hash from the store-rooms, and treated them with radium for two days. These I shipped to the Catskills billed as hydrogen gas. Then, accompanied by two trustworthy assistants, I went to the sanatorium and preferred my demand for payment in person. I was ejected with contumely. Before my hasty exit, however, I had the satisfaction of noticing that the building was filled with patients. Languid ladies were seated in wicker-chairs upon the piazzas, and frail anemic girls filled the corridors. It was a hospital of nervous wrecks whom the slightest disturbance would throw into a panic. I suppressed all my finer feelings of mercy and kindness and smiled grimly as I walked back to the village.

That night was black and lowering, fitting weather for the pandemonium I was about to turn loose. At ten o'clock, I loaded a wagon with the tanks of compressed cohorts, and, muffled in heavy overcoats, we drove to the sanatorium. All was silent as we approached; all was dark. The wagon concealed in a grove of pines, we took out the tanks, one by one, and placed them beneath the ground-floor windows. The sashes were easily forced open, and raised enough to enable us to insert the rubber tubes connected with the iron reservoirs. At midnight everything was ready.

I gave the word, and my assistants ran from tank to tank, opening the stop-cocks. With a hiss as of escaping steam the huge vessels emptied themselves, vomiting forth clouds of vapor, which, upon contact with the air, coagulated into strange shapes, as the white of an egg does when dropped into boiling

water. The rooms became instantly filled with dismembered shades of men and horses seeking wildly to unite themselves with their proper parts.

Legs ran down the corridors, seeking their respective trunks, arms writhed wildly reaching for missing bodies, heads rolled hither and yon in search of native necks. Horses' tails and hoofs whisked and hurried in quest of equine ownership until, reorganized, the spectral steeds galloped about to find their riders.

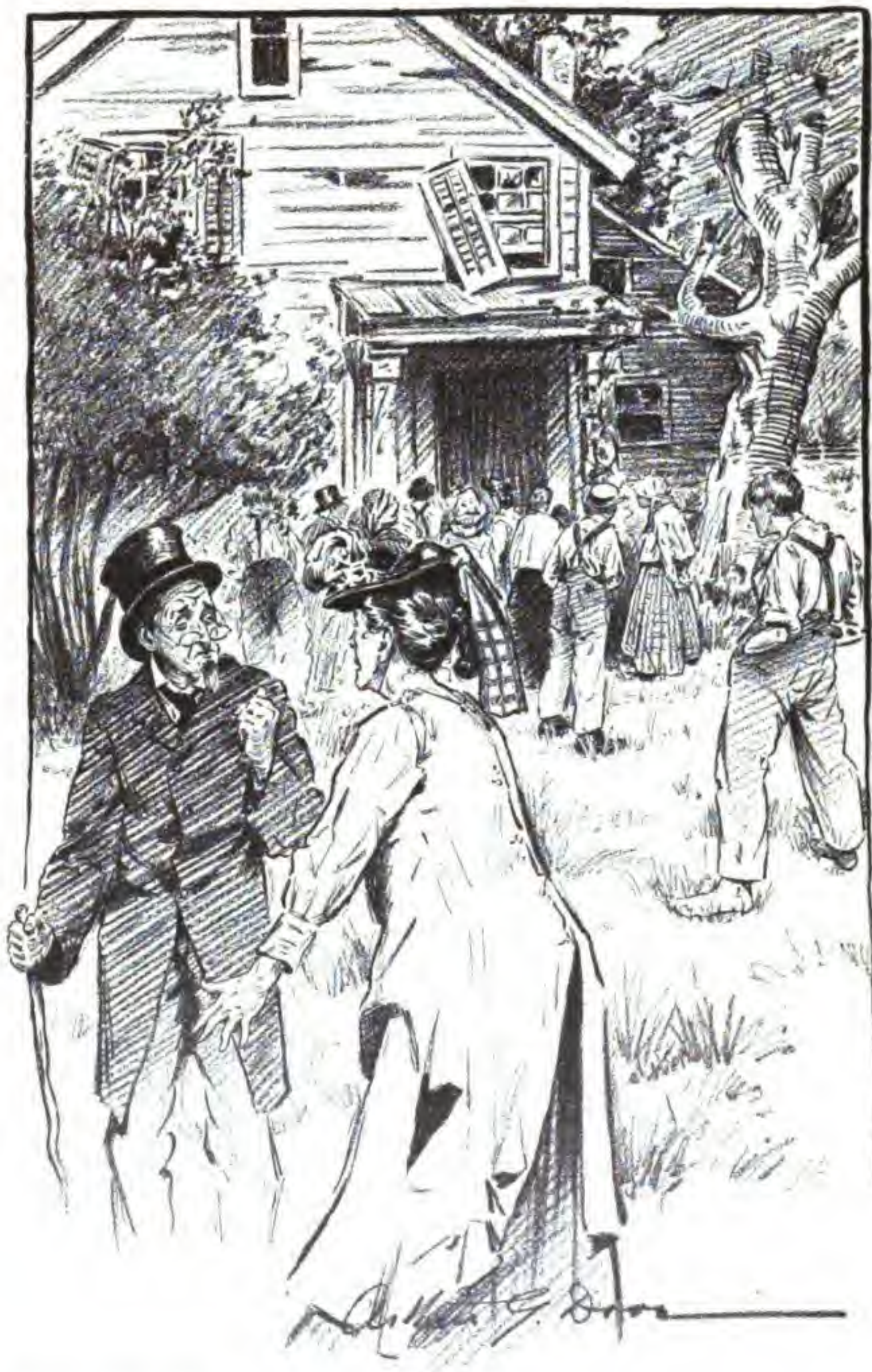
Had it been possible, I would have stopped this riot of wraiths long ere this, for it was more awful than I had anticipated, but it was already too late. Cowering in the garden, I began to hear the screams of awakened and distracted patients. In another moment, the front door of the hotel was burst open, and a mob of hysterical women in expensive nightgowns rushed out upon the lawn, and huddled in shrieking groups.

I fled into the night.

I fled, but Napoleon's men fled with me. Compelled by I know not what fatal astral attraction, perhaps the subtle affinity of the creature for the creator, the spectral shells, moved by some mysterious mechanics of spiritual being, pursued me with fatuous fury. I sought refuge, first, in my laboratory, but, even as I approached, a lurid glare foretold me of its destruction. As I drew nearer, the whole ghost-factory was seen to be in flames; every moment crackling reports were heard, as the overheated tins of phantasmagoria exploded and threw their supernatural contents upon the night. These liberated ghosts joined the army of Napoleon's outraged warriors, and turned upon me. There was not enough formaldybrom in all the world to quench their fierce energy. There was no place in all the world safe for me from their visitation. No ghost-extinguisher was powerful enough to lay the host of spirits that haunted me henceforth, and I had neither time nor money left with which to construct new Gatling quick-firing tanks.

It is little comfort to me to know that one hundred nervous invalids were completely restored to health by means of the terrific shock which I administered.





*Drawn by Arthur G. Dove*

CROWDS OF PERSONS ASSEMBLED AT THE HARDING HOUSE "SEEKING A SIGN"



# Some Uncanny Tales

BY AMBROSE BIERCE

## *A Vine on a House*



ABOUT three miles from the little town of Norton, in Missouri, on the road leading to Maysville, stands an old house that was last occupied by a family named Harding. Since 1886 no one has lived in it, nor is anyone likely to live in it again. Time and the disfavor of persons dwelling thereabout are converting it into a rather picturesque ruin. An observer unacquainted with its history would hardly put it into the category of "haunted houses," yet in all the region round such is its evil reputation. Its windows are without glass, its doorways without doors; there are wide breaches in the shingle roof, and for lack of paint the weatherboarding is a dun-gray. But these unfailing signs of the supernatural are partly concealed and greatly softened by the abundant foliage of a large vine overrunning the entire structure. This vine—of a species which no botanist has ever been able to name—has an important part in the story of the house.

The Harding family consisted of Robert Harding, his wife Matilda, Miss Julia Went, who was her sister, and two young children. Robert Harding was a silent, saturnine man who made no friends in the neighborhood, and apparently did not care to. He was about forty years old, frugal and industrious, and made a living from the little farm which is now overgrown with brush and brambles. He and his sister-in-law were rather tabooed by their neighbors, who seemed to think that they were seen too frequently together—not entirely their fault, for at these times they evidently did not challenge observation. The moral code of rural Missouri is stern and exacting.

Mrs. Harding was a well-mannered, sad-eyed woman, lacking a left foot.

At some time in 1884 it became known that Mrs. Harding had gone to visit her mother in Iowa. That was what her hus-

band said in reply to inquiries, and his manner of saying it did not encourage further questioning. She never came back, and two years later, without selling his farm or anything that was his, or appointing an agent to look after his interests, or removing his household goods, Harding, with the rest of the family, left the country. Nobody knew whither he went; nobody at that time cared. Naturally, whatever was movable about the place soon disappeared, and the deserted house became "haunted" in the manner of its kind.

One summer evening, four or five years later, the Rev. J. Gruber, of Norton, and a Maysville attorney named Hyatt met on horseback in front of the Harding place. Having some business matters to discuss, they hitched their animals and, going to the house, sat on the porch to talk. Some humorous reference to the somber reputation of the place was made, and forgotten as soon as uttered, and they talked of their business affairs until it grew almost dark. The evening was oppressively warm, the air absolutely stagnant.

Suddenly both men started from their seats in surprise: a long vine that covered half the front of the house and dangled its branches from the edge of the porch above them was visibly and audibly agitated, shaking violently in every stem and leaf.

"We shall have a storm," Hyatt exclaimed.

Gruber said nothing, but silently directed the other's attention to the foliage of adjacent trees, which showed no movement; even the delicate tips of the boughs silhouetted against the clear sky were motionless. They hastily passed down the steps to what had been a lawn and looked upward to the vine, whose entire length was now visible. It continued in violent agitation, yet they could discern no disturbing cause.

"Let us leave," said the minister.

And leave they did. Forgetting that they had been traveling in opposite directions, they rode away together. They went to Norton, where they related their uncanny



experience to several discreet friends. The next evening, at about the same hour, accompanied by two others whose names are not recalled by the writer, they were again on the porch of the Harding house, and again the mysterious phenomenon occurred: the vine was violently agitated while under the closest scrutiny from root to tip, nor did their combined strength applied to the trunk serve to still it. After an hour's observation they retreated, no less wise than when they had come.

No great time was required for these singular facts to rouse the curiosity of the entire neighborhood. By day and by night crowds of persons assembled at the Harding house "seeking a sign." It does not appear that any found it, yet so credible were the witnesses mentioned that none doubted the reality of the "manifestations" to which they testified.

By either a happy inspiration or some destructive design, it was one day proposed—nobody appeared to know from whom the suggestion came—to dig up the vine, and after a good deal of debate this was done. Nothing was found but the root, yet nothing could have been more strange!

For five or six feet from the trunk, which had at the surface of the ground a diameter of several inches, it ran downward, single and straight, into a loose, friable earth; then it divided and subdivided into rootlets, fibers and filaments, most curiously interwoven. When carefully freed from soil, they showed a singular formation. In their ramifications and doublings back upon themselves they made a compact network, having in size and shape an amazing resemblance to the human figure. Head, body and limbs were there; even the fingers and toes were distinctly defined; and many professed to see in the distribution and arrangement of the fibers in the globular mass representing the head a grotesque suggestion of a face. The figure was horizontal; the single great root had begun to divide at the breast.

In point of resemblance to the human form this image was imperfect. At about ten inches from one of the knees, the *cilia* forming that leg had abruptly doubled backward and inward upon their course of growth. The figure lacked the left foot.

There was but one inference—the obvious one; but in the ensuing excitement as many courses of action were proposed as there

were counselors who did not know what to do. The matter was settled by the sheriff of the county, who, as the lawful custodian of the abandoned estate, ordered the root replaced and the excavation filled with the earth that had been removed.

Later inquiry brought out only one fact of relevancy and significance: Mrs. Harding had never visited her relatives in Iowa, nor did they know that she was supposed to have done so. Of Robert Harding and the rest of his family nothing is known to this day. The house retains its evil reputation, but the replanted vine is as orderly and well-behaved a vegetable as a nervous person could wish to sit under of a pleasant summer night when the katydids grate out their immemorial revelation and the distant whip-poorwill signifies his notion of what ought to be done about it.

### *A Man with Two Lives*

This is the queer story of David William Duck, related by himself. Duck is an old man living in Aurora, Illinois, where he is universally respected. He is commonly known, however, as "Dead Duck."

"In the autumn of 1866 I was a private soldier of the Eighteenth Infantry. My company was one of those stationed at Fort Phil Kearney, commanded by Colonel Carrington. The country is more or less familiar with the history of that garrison, particularly with the slaughter by the Sioux of a detachment of nearly a hundred men and officers—not one escaping—through disobedience of orders by its commander, the brave but reckless Captain Fetterman. When that occurred, I was trying to make my way with important dispatches to Fort C. F. Smith, on the Big Horn. As the country swarmed with hostile Indians, I traveled by night and concealed myself as best I could before daybreak. The better to do so, I went afoot, armed with a Henry rifle and carrying three days' rations in my haversack.

"For my second place of concealment I chose what seemed in the darkness a narrow cañon leading through a range of rocky hills. Flowing out of this was a creek of no considerable size, bordered by cottonwood trees and large boulders that had been detached from the slopes of the hills. Behind one of these, in a clump of sage-brush, I





*Drawn by Arthur G. Dove*

"FOR TWO DAYS AND NIGHTS . . . I FOUGHT THE FELLOWS AT LONG RANGE"

made my bed for the day, and soon fell asleep. It seemed as if I had hardly closed my eyes, though in fact it was near midday, when I was awakened by the report of a rifle, the bullet striking the boulder just above my body. A band of Indians had trailed me and had me nearly surrounded; the shot had been fired, with an execrable aim, by a fellow who had caught sight of me from the hillside above. The smoke of his rifle betrayed him, and I was no sooner on my feet than he was off his and rolling down the declivity. Then I ran in a stooping posture, dodging among the clumps of sage-brush in a storm of bullets from invisible enemies. The rascals did not rise and pursue, which I thought rather queer, as they must have known by my trail that they had to deal with only one man. The reason for their inaction was soon made clear. I had not gone a hundred yards before I reached a large spring—the source of the creek. Immediately beyond was the head of the gulch which I had mistaken for a cañon; it terminated in a concave surface of rock, nearly vertical and destitute of vegetation. In that cul-de-sac I was caught like a rat in a trap. Pursuit was needless; they had only to wait.

"They waited. For two days and nights, crouching behind a rock topped with a growth of mesquite, and with the cliff at my back, suffering agonies of thirst and

absolutely hopeless of deliverance, I fought the fellows at long range, firing occasionally at the smoke of their rifles, as they did at that of mine. Of course, I did not dare to close my eyes at night, and lack of sleep was my keenest torture.

"I remember the morning of the third day, which I knew was to be my last. I remember, rather indistinctly, that in my desperation and delirium I sprang out into the open and began firing my repeating-rifle without seeing anybody to fire at. And I remember no more of that fight.

"The next thing that I recollect was my pulling myself out of a river just at nightfall. I had not a rag of clothing and knew nothing of my whereabouts, but all that night I traveled, cold and footsore, toward the north. At daybreak I found myself at Fort C. F. Smith, my destination, but without my dispatches. The first man that I met was a sergeant named William Briscoe, whom I knew very well. You can fancy his astonishment at seeing me in that condition, and my own at his asking who the devil I was.

"'Dave Duck,' I answered; 'who should I be?'

"He stared like an owl.

"'You do look it,' he said, and I observed that he drew a little away from me. 'What's up?' he added.

"I told him what had happened to me the





*Drawn by Arthur G. Dove*

HE TOOK OUT HIS WATCH TO SEE IF HE COULD MAKE OUT THE FIGURES ON THE DIAL.

day before. He heard me through, still staring; then he said:

"My dear fellow, if you are Dave Duck I ought to inform you that I buried you two months ago. I was out with a small scouting party and found your body, full of bullet-holes and newly scalped—somewhat mutilated too, I am sorry to say—right where you say you made your fight. Come to my tent and I'll show you your clothing and some letters that I took from your person; the commandant has your dispatches."

"He performed that promise. He showed me the clothing, which I resolutely put on; the letters, which I put into my pocket. He made no objection, then took

me to the commandant, who heard my story and coldly ordered Briscoe to take me to the guard-house. On the way I said:

"Bill Briscoe, did you really and truly bury the dead body that you found in these togs?"

"Sure," he answered—"just as I told you. It was Dave Duck, all right; most of us knew him. And now, you damned impostor, you'd better tell me who you are and what all this means!"

"I'd give something to know," I said.

"A week later, I escaped from the fort and got out of the country as fast as I could. Twice I have been back, seeking for that fateful spot in the hills, but unable to find it."

### *A Wireless Message*

In the summer of 1896 Mr. William Holt, a wealthy manufacturer of Chicago, was living temporarily in a little town of central New

York, the name of which the writer's memory has not retained. Mr. Holt had had "trouble with his wife," from whom he had separated a year before. Whether the trouble was anything more serious than "incompatibility of temper" he is probably the only living person that knows: he is a man not addicted to the vice of confidences. Yet he has related the incident herein set down to at least one person without exacting any pledge of secrecy. He is now in Europe.

One evening he had left the house of a brother with whom he was living, for a stroll in the country. It may be assumed—whatever the value of the assumption in connection with what is said to have occurred—



that his mind was occupied with reflections on his domestic infelicities and the distressing changes that they had wrought in his life. Whatever may have been his thoughts, they so possessed him that he observed neither the lapse of time nor whither his feet were carrying him; he knew only that he had passed far beyond the town limits and was traversing a lonely region by a road that bore no resemblance to the one by which he had left the village. In brief, he was "lost." Realizing the mischance, he smiled; central New York is not a region of perils, nor does one long remain lost in it. He turned about and went back the way that he had come. Before he had gone far, he observed that the landscape was growing more distinctly visible—was brightening. Everything was suffused with a soft, red glow in which he saw his shadow projected in the road before him. "The moon is rising," he said to himself. Then he remembered that it was the time of the new moon, and if that tricky orb was in one of its stages of visibility it had set long before. He stopped and faced about, seeking the source of the rapidly broadening light. As he did so, his shadow turned and lay along the road in front of him as before. The light still came from behind him. That was disquieting; he could not understand. Again he turned, and again, facing successively to every point of the horizon. Always the shadow was before—always the light behind, "a still and awful red."

Holt was inexpressibly surprised—"dumbfounded" is the word that he used in telling it—yet seems to have retained a certain intelligent curiosity. To test the intensity of the light whose nature and cause he could not determine, he took out his watch to see if he could make out the figures on the dial. They were distinctly visible, and the hands indicated the hour of eleven o'clock and twenty-five minutes. At that moment the mysterious illumination suddenly flared to an intenser, an almost blinding, splendor, flushing the entire sky, extinguishing the stars and throwing the monstrous shadow of himself athwart the whole landscape. In that unearthly illumination he saw near him, but apparently in the air at a considerable elevation, the figure of his wife, clad in her night-clothing and holding to her breast the figure of his child. Her eyes were fixed upon his with an expression which he professed himself

unable to name or describe, further than that it was "not of this life."

The flare was momentary, followed by black darkness, in which, however, the apparition still showed white and motionless; then by insensible degrees it faded and vanished, like a bright image on the retina after the closing of the eyes. A peculiarity of the apparition, hardly noted at the time,



*Drawn by Arthur G. Dove*

THEN HE TURNED. NOBODY ELSE HAD ENTERED

but afterward recalled, was that it showed only the upper half of the woman's figure: nothing was seen below the waist.

The sudden darkness was comparative, not absolute, for gradually all objects of his environment became again visible. The



persisting but ever-fading light served to guide his shaking legs from the spot, in what direction he neither knew nor cared.

In the dawn of the morning Holt found himself entering the village at a point opposite to that at which he had left it. He soon arrived at the house of his brother, who hardly knew him. He was wild-eyed, haggard, and gray as a rat. Almost incoherently, he related his night's experience.

"Go to bed, my poor fellow," said his brother, "and—wait. We shall hear more of this."

An hour later came the predestined telegram. Holt's dwelling in one of the suburbs of Chicago had been destroyed by fire. Her escape cut off by the flames, his wife had appeared at an upper window, her child in her arms. There she stood, motionless, apparently dazed. Just as the firemen arrived with a ladder, the roof fell in with a loud crash, followed by a blinding light, and she was seen no more. The moment of this culminating horror was eleven o'clock and twenty-five minutes, standard time.

### *An Arrest*

Having murdered his brother-in-law, Orrin Mannering was a fugitive from justice. From the Dunham County jail, in Tennessee, where he had been confined to await his trial, he had escaped by knocking down his jailer with an iron bar, robbing him of his keys and, opening the outer door, walking out into the night. The jailer being unarmed, Mannering got no weapon with which to defend his recovered liberty. As soon as he was out of the town, he had the folly to enter a forest; this was many years ago, when that region was wilder than it is now.

The night was pretty dark, with neither moon nor stars visible, and as Mannering had never dwelt thereabout, and knew nothing of the lay of the land, he was, naturally, not long in losing himself. He could not have said if he were getting farther away from the town or going back to it—a most important matter to Orrin Mannering. He knew that in either case a posse of citizens, with a pack of bloodhounds, would soon be on his track and his chance of escape was very slender; but he did not wish to assist in his own pursuit. Even an added hour of freedom was worth having.

Suddenly he emerged from the forest into an old road, and there before him saw, indistinctly, the figure of a man, motionless in the gloom—evidently posted there to intercept him. It was too late to retreat: the fugitive felt that at the first movement back toward the wood he would be, as he afterward explained, "filled with buckshot." So the two stood there like trees, Mannering nearly suffocated by the activity of his own heart; the other—the emotions of the other are not of record.

A moment later—it may have been an hour—the moon sailed into a patch of unclouded sky and the hunted man saw that visible embodiment of Law lift his arm and point significantly toward and beyond him. He understood. Turning his back to his captor, he walked submissively away in the direction indicated, looking to neither the right nor the left; hardly daring to breathe, his head and back actually aching with a prophecy of buckshot.

Mannering was as courageous a criminal as ever lived to be hanged; that was shown by the conditions of awful personal peril under which he had coolly killed his brother-in-law. It is needless to relate them here; they came out at his trial, and the revelation of his calmness in confronting them came near to saving his neck. But what would you have?—when a brave man is beaten, he submits to the inevitable.

So they pursued their journey jailward along the old road through the woods. Only once did Mannering venture a turn of the head: just once, when he was in deep shadow and he knew that the other was in moonlight, he looked backward. His captor was John Duff, the jailer, as white as death and bearing upon his brow the livid mark of the iron bar. Orrin Mannering had no further curiosity.

Eventually they entered the town, which was all alight, but deserted; only the women and children remained, and they were off the streets. Straight toward the jail the criminal held his way. Straight up to the main entrance he walked, laid his hand upon the knob of the heavy iron door, pushed it open without command, entered and found himself in the presence of a half-dozen armed men. Then he turned. Nobody else had entered.

On a table in the corridor lay the dead body of John Duff.





*Drawn by James Preston*

## Some Uncanny Tales

BY AMBROSE BIERCE

### ONE SUMMER NIGHT

**T**HE fact that Henry Armstrong was buried did not seem to him to prove that he was dead: he had always been a hard man to convince. That he really was buried the testimony of his senses compelled him to admit. His posture—flat upon his back, with his hands crossed upon his stomach and tied with something that he easily broke without profitably altering the situation—the strict confinement of his entire person, the black darkness and profound silence, made a body of evidence impossible to controvert and he accepted it without cavil.

But dead—no; he was only very, very ill. He had, withal, the invalid's apathy and did not greatly concern himself about the uncommon fate that had been allotted to him. No philosopher was he—just a plain, commonplace person gifted, for the time being, with a pathological indifference: the organ that he feared consequences with was torpid. So, with no particular

apprehension for his immediate future, he fell asleep and all was peace with Henry Armstrong.

But something was going on overhead. It was a dark summer night, shot through with infrequent shimmers of lightning silently firing a cloud lying low in the west and portending a storm. These brief, stammering illuminations brought out with ghastly distinctness the monuments and headstones of the cemetery and seemed to set them dancing. It was not a night in which any credible witness was likely to be straying about a cemetery, so the three men who were there, digging into the grave of Henry Armstrong, felt reasonably secure.

Two of them were young students from a medical college a few miles away; the third was a gigantic negro known as Jess. For many years Jess had been employed about the cemetery as a man-of-all-work and it was his favorite pleasantry that he knew "every soul in the place." From the nature of what he was now doing it was inferable that the place was not so populous as its register may have shown it to be. Outside the wall, at the part of the grounds



farthest from the public road, were a horse and a light wagon, waiting.

The work of excavation was not difficult: the earth with which the grave had been loosely filled a few hours before offered little resistance and was soon thrown out. Removal of the casket from its box was less easy, but it was taken out, for it was a perquisite of Jess, who carefully unscrewed the cover and laid it aside, exposing the body in black trousers and white shirt. At that instant the air sprang to flame, a cracking shock of thunder shook the stunned world and Henry Armstrong tranquilly sat up. With inarticulate cries the men fled in terror, each in a different direction. For nothing on earth could two of them have been persuaded to return. But Jess was of another breed.

In the gray of the morning the two students, pallid and haggard with anxiety and with the terror of their adventure still beating in their blood, met at the college.

"You saw it?" cried one.

"God! yes—what are we to do?"

What they did was to pass around to the rear of the building, where they saw a horse, attached to a light wagon, hitched to a gatepost near the door of the dissecting room. Mechanically they entered the room. On a bench in a corner sat the negro Jess. He rose, grinning, all eyes and teeth.

"I'm waiting for my pay," he said.

Stretched naked on a long table lay the body of Henry Armstrong, the head defiled with blood and with clay from a blow with a spade.

### JOHN MORTONSON'S FUNERAL

**J**OHN MORTONSON was dead: his lines in "the tragedy 'Man'" had all been spoken and he had left the stage.

The body rested in a fine mahogany coffin fitted with a plate of glass. All arrangements for the funeral had been so well attended to that had the deceased known he would doubtless have approved. The face, as it showed under the glass, was not disagreeable to look upon: it bore a faint smile, and as the death had been painless had not been distorted beyond the repairing power of the undertaker. At two o'clock of the afternoon the friends were to

assemble to pay their last tribute of respect to one who had no further need of friends and respect. The surviving members of the family came severally every few minutes to the casket and wept above the placid features beneath the glass. This did them no good; it did no good to John Mortonson; but in the presence of death reason and philosophy are silent.

As the hour of two approached the friends began to arrive and after offering such consolation to the stricken relatives as the proprieties of the occasion required, solemnly seated themselves about the room with an augmented consciousness of their importance in the scheme funereal. Then the minister came, and in that overshadowing presence the lesser lights went into eclipse. His entrance was followed by that of the widow, whose lamentations filled the room. She approached the casket and after leaning her face against the cold glass for a moment was gently led to a seat near her daughter. Mournfully and low the man of God began his eulogy of the dead, and his doleful voice, mingled with the sobbing which it was its purpose to stimulate and sustain, rose and fell, seemed to come and go, like the sound of a sullen sea. The gloomy day grew darker as he spoke; a curtain of cloud underspread the sky and a few drops of rain fell audibly. It seemed as if all nature were weeping for John Mortonson.

When the minister had finished his eulogy with prayer, a hymn was sung and the pallbearers took their places beside the bier. As the last notes of the hymn died away the widow rushed frantically to the coffin, cast herself upon it and sobbed hysterically. Gradually, however, she yielded to dissuasion, becoming more composed; and as the minister was in the act of leading her away her eyes sought the face of the dead beneath the glass. She threw up her arms, her face assumed a dreadful pallor, and with a shriek she fell backward insensible.

The mourners sprang forward to the coffin, the friends followed, and as the clock on the mantel solemnly struck three all eyes were staring down upon the face of John Mortonson, deceased.

They turned away, sick and faint. One man, trying in his terror to escape the awful sight, stumbled against the coffin so heavily as to knock away one of its frail supports. The coffin fell to the floor, the glass was





*Drawn by James Preston*

WITH INARTICULATE CRIES THE MEN FLED IN TERROR

shattered to bits by the concussion. From the opening crawled John Mortonson's cat, which lazily leapt to the floor, sat, tranquilly wiped its crimson muzzle with a forepaw, then walked with dignity from the room.

### STALEY FLEMING'S HALLUCINATION

**O**F two men who were talking one was a physician. "I sent for you, Halderman," said the other, "but I don't think you can do me any good. May be you can recommend a specialist in psychopathy. I fancy I'm a bit loony."

"You don't look it," the physician said.

"You shall judge—I have hallucinations. I wake every night and see in my room, intently watching me, a big black Newfoundland dog with a white forefoot."

"You say you wake; are you sure about that? 'Hallucinations' are commonly dreams."

"Oh, I wake, all right. Sometimes I lie still a long time, looking at the dog as earnestly as the dog looks at me—I always leave the light going. When I can't endure it any longer I sit up in bed and—nothing is there!"

"M, 'm—what is the beast's expression?"

"It seems to me sinister. Of course I know that, except in art, an animal's face in





*Drawn by James Preston*

HIS ENTRANCE WAS FOLLOWED BY THAT OF  
THE WIDOW

repose has always the same expression. But this is not a real animal. Newfoundland dogs are pretty mild looking, you know; what's the matter with this one?"

"Really, my diagnosis would have no value: I am not going to treat the dog."

The physician laughed at his own pleasantry, but narrowly watched his patient from the corner of his eye. Presently he said, "Fleming, your description of the beast fits the dog of the late Atwell Barton."

Fleming half-rose from his chair, sat again and made a visible attempt at indifference. "I remember Barton," he said; "I believe he was—it was reported that—wasn't there something suspicious in his death?"

Looking squarely now into the eyes of his patient, the physician said: "Three years ago the body of your old enemy, Atwell Barton, was found in the woods near his house and yours. He had been stabbed to death. There have been no arrests; there was no clew. Some of us had 'theories.' I had one. Have you?"

"I? Why, bless your soul, what could I know about it? You remember that I left for Europe almost immediately afterward—a considerable time afterward. In the few weeks since my return you could not expect me to construct a 'theory.' In fact I have not given the matter a thought. What about his dog?"

"It was first to find the body. It died of starvation on his grave."

We do not know the inexorable law underlying coincidences. Staley Fleming did not, or he would perhaps not have sprung to his feet as the night wind brought in through the open window the long wailing howl of a distant dog. He strode several times across the room in the steadfast gaze of the physician; then, abruptly confronting him, almost shouted: "What has all this to do with my trouble? You forget why you were sent for."

Rising, the physician laid his hand upon his patient's arm and said, gently: "Pardon me. I cannot diagnose your disorder off-hand—to-morrow, perhaps. Please go to bed, leaving your door unlocked; I will pass the night here with your books. Can you call me without rising?"

"Yes, there is an electric bell."

"Good. If—if anything disturbs you, push the button without sitting up. Good night."

Comfortably installed in an armchair the





*Drawn by James Preston*

"I WAKE EVERY NIGHT AND SEE IN MY ROOM A BIG BLACK NEWFOUNDLAND DOG"

man of medicine stared into the glowing coals and thought deeply and long, but apparently to little purpose, for he frequently rose and, opening a door leading to the staircase, listened intently; then resumed his seat. Presently, however, he fell asleep, and when he woke it was past midnight. He stirred the failing fire, lifted a book from the table at his side and looked at the title. It was Denneker's "Meditations." He opened it at random and began to read:

"Forasmuch as it is ordained of God that all flesh hath spirit and thereby taketh on spiritual powers, so, also, the spirit hath powers of the flesh, even when it is gone out of the flesh and liveth as a thing apart, as many a violence performed by wraith and lemure sheweth. And there be who say that man is not single in this, but the beasts have the like evil induement and——"

The reading was interrupted by a shaking of the house, as by the appulse of a heavy object. The reader flung down the book, rushed from the room and mounted the stairs to Fleming's bedchamber. He tried the door, but contrary to his instructions it was locked. He set his shoulder against it with such force that it gave way. On the floor near the disordered bed, in his night clothes, lay Fleming gasping away his life.

The physician raised the dying man's head from the floor and observed a wound in the throat. "I should have thought of this," he said, believing it suicide.

When the man was dead an examination disclosed the unmistakable marks of an animal's fangs deeply sunken into the jugular vein.

But there was no animal.



# Insurance in Ancient America

Translated from the Work of the Future Historian

BY AMBROSE BIERCE



**A**MONG the principal causes of that popular discontent which brought about the stupendous events resulting in the downfall of the great American republic, historians and archaeologists are now agreed in reckoning insurance. Of the exact nature of this factor in the problem of national life in that distant day, the fragmentary literature of the period leaves us imperfectly informed; many of its details have perished from human record, yet its outlines loom large through the mist of the ages and can be traced with precision. In the monumental work of Professor Golunk-Dorstro ("Some Account of the Insurance Delusion in Ancient America") we have its most considerable modern exposition; and Gakler's well-known volume, "The Follies of Antiquity," contains much interesting matter relating to it. From these and other sources the student of human unreason can reconstruct that astounding fallacy of insurance as, from three joints of its tail, the great naturalist Bogramus restored the ancient elephant, from hoof to horn.

The game of insurance, as practiced by the ancient Americans (and, as Gakler conjectures, by some of the tribesmen of Europe), was gambling, pure and simple, despite the sentimental character that its proponents sought to impress upon some forms of it for the greater prosperity of their dealings with its dupes. Essentially, it was a bet between the insurer and the insured. The number of ways in which the wager was made—all devised by the insurer—was almost infinite, but in none of them was there a departure from the intrinsic nature of the transaction as seen in its simplest, frankest form, which we shall here expound.

To those unlearned in the economical institutions of antiquity it is necessary to explain that in ancient America, long prior to the Japanese conquest, individual ownership of property prevailed; every person

was permitted to get as much as he was able, and to hold it as his own without regard to his needs, or whether he made any good use of it or not. By some plan of distribution not now understood even the habitable surface of the earth, with the minerals beneath, was parceled out among the favored few, and there was really no place except at sea where children of the others could lawfully be born. Upon a part of the dry land that he had been able to acquire, or had leased from another for the purpose, a man would build a house worth, say, ten thousand drusoes. (The ancient unit of value was the "dollar," but nothing is now known as to its actual worth.) Long before the building was complete the owner was beset by "touts" and "cappers" of the insurance game, who poured into his ears the most ingenious expositions of the advantages of betting that it would burn down—for with incredible fatuity the people of that time continued, generation after generation, to build inflammable habitations. The persons whom the capper represented—they called themselves an "insurance company"—stood ready to accept the bet, a fact which seems to have generated no suspicion in the mind of the house-owner. Theoretically, of course, if the house did burn, payment of the wager would partly or wholly recoup the winner of the bet for the loss of his house, but in fact the result of the transaction was commonly very different. For the privilege of betting that his property would be destroyed by fire, the owner had to pay to the gentleman betting that it would not be, a certain percentage of its value every year, called a "premium." The amount of this was determined by the company, which employed statisticians and actuaries to fix it at such a sum that, according to the law of probabilities, long before the house was "due to burn," the company would have received more than the value of it in premiums. In other words, the owner of the house would himself supply the money to pay his bet, and a good deal more.



But how, it may be asked, could the company's actuary know that the man's house would last until he had paid in more than its insured value in premiums—more, that is to say, than the company would have to pay back? He could not, but from his statistics he could know how many houses in ten thousand of that kind burned in their first year, how many in their second, their third, and so on. That was all that he needed to know, the house-owners knowing nothing about it. He fixed his rates according to the facts, and the occasional loss of a bet in an individual instance did not affect the certainty of a general winning. Like other professional gamblers, the company expected to lose sometimes, yet knew that in the long run it *must* win; which meant that in any special case it would *probably* win. With a thousand gambling games open to him in which the chances were equal, the infatuated dupe chose to "sit into" one where they were against him! Deceived by the cappers' fairy tales, dazed by the complex and incomprehensible "calculations" put forth for his undoing, and having ever in the ear of his imagination the crackle and roar of the impoverishing flames, he grasped at the hope of beating—in an unwelcome way, it is true—"the man that kept the table." He must have known for a certainty that if the company could afford to insure him, he could not afford to let it. He must have known that the whole body of the insured paid to the insurers more than the insurers paid to them; otherwise the business could not have been conducted. This they cheerfully admitted; indeed, they proudly affirmed it. In fact, insurance companies were the only professional gamblers that had the incredible hardihood to parade their enormous winnings as an inducement to play against their game. These winnings ("assets," they called them) proved their ability, they said, to pay when they lost; and that was indubitably true. What they did not prove, unfortunately, was the *will* to pay, which, from the imperfect court records of the period that have come down to us, appears frequently to have been lacking. Gakler relates that in the instance of the city of San Farisco (somewhat doubtfully identified by Macronus as the modern fishing-village of Gharoo) the disinclination of the insurance companies to pay their bets had the most momentous consequences.

In the year 1906, as the ancients reckoned time, San Farisco was totally destroyed by fire. The conflagration was caused by the friction of a pig scratching itself against an angle of a wooden building. More than one hundred thousand persons perished, and the loss of property is estimated by Kobo-Dogarque at one and a half million drusoes. On more than two-thirds of this enormous sum the insurance companies had laid bets, and the greater part of it they refused to pay. In justification they pointed out that the deed performed by the pig was "an act of God," who in the analogous instance of the express companies had been specifically forbidden to take any action affecting the interests of parties to a contract, or the result of an agreed undertaking.

In the ensuing litigation their attorneys cited two notable precedents. Several years before the San Farisco disaster, another American city had experienced a similar one through the upsetting of a lamp by the kick of a cow. In that case, also, the insurance companies had successfully denied their liability on the ground that the cow, manifestly incited by some supernatural power, had unlawfully influenced the result of a wager to which she was not a party. The companies defendant had contended that the recourse of the property-owners was against, not them, but the owner of the cow. In his decision sustaining that view and dismissing the case, a learned judge (afterward president of one of the defendant companies) had in the legal phraseology of the period pronounced the action of the cow an obvious and flagrant instance of "butting in." Kobo-Dogarque believes that this decision was afterward reversed by an appellate court of opposite political complexion and the companies were compelled to compromise, but of this there is no record. It is certain that in the San Farisco case the precedent was triumphantly urged.

Another precedent which the companies cited with a particular emphasis related to an unfortunate occurrence at a famous millionaires' club in London, the capital of the renowned king, Jon Bul. A gentleman passing in the street fell in a fit and was carried into the club in convulsions. Two members promptly made a bet upon his life. A physician who chanced to be present set to work upon the patient, when one of the members who had laid the wager came forward and restrained him, saying:



"Sir, I beg that you will attend to your own business. I have my money on that fit."

Doubtless these two notable precedents did not constitute the entire case of the defendants in the San Francisco insurance litigation, but the additional arguments are lost to us. It is known only that after many years of bitter litigation public patience was exhausted and a comparatively trivial occurrence fired the combustible elements of popular indignation to a white heat in which the entire insurance business of the country was burned out of existence, together with all the gamblers who had invented and conducted it. The president of one of the defaulting companies was walking one morning in a street of the new San Francisco, when he had the bad luck to step on the tail of a dog and was bitten in retaliation. Frenzied by the pain of the wound he gave the creature a savage kick and it ran howling toward a group of idlers in front of a grocery store. In ancient America the dog was a sacred animal, worshiped by all sorts and conditions of tribesmen. The idlers at once raised a great cry and setting upon the offender beat him so that he died. Their act was infectious: men, women, and children trooped out of their dwellings by thousands to join them, brandishing whatever weapons they could snatch, and uttering wild cries of vengeance. This formidable mob overpowered the police, and marching from one insurance office to another, successively demolished them all, slew such officers as they could lay hands on, and chased the fugitive survivors into the sea, "where," says a quaint chronicle of the time, "they were eaten by their kindred, the sharks." This carnival of violence continued all the day, and at set of sun not one person connected with any form of insurance remained alive.

Ferocious and bloody as was the massacre, it was only the beginning. As the news of it went blazing and coruscating along the wires by which intelligence was then conveyed across the country, city after city caught the contagion. Everywhere, even in the small hamlets and the agricultural districts, the dupes rose against their dupers. The smoldering resentment of years burst into flame, and within a week all that was left of insurance in America was the record of a monstrous and cruel delusion written in the blood of its promoters.

Students of the history of those troublous times need not be told what other and bloodier events logically followed that awful reprisal, until the whole stupendous edifice of popular government, temple and citadel of all fallacies and abuses, crashed to ruin, and among its fallen columns and scattered stones gave shelter to a diminishing population of skulking anarchists, who finally vanished from history into a darkness impenetrable to conjecture.

It remains only to say in justice that of the many forms of gambling known of old as insurance, the kind called life insurance appears to have been most nearly a "square game." In essence it was the same as fire insurance, marine insurance, accident insurance, and so forth, with an added offensiveness in that it was a betting on human lives—commonly by the policy-holder on lives that should have been most sacred to him and all the more immune from any taint of traffic. But it seems to have a just claim to the second place in the scale of crime indicated in an epigram of the period: "The next worse thing to an insurance business dishonestly conducted is an insurance business conducted honestly." So far as we of to-day have knowledge of the matter, life insurance was conducted as honest gambling, as to both payment of bets and distribution of winnings. If accusations to the contrary were made they have not come down to us; the ink in which they were written has faded from the scroll of history. The only writer of antiquity who is known to have mentioned them at any considerable length is Tomlawson, nicknamed, for some unknown reason, "the Bostonian," an author of great repute in that age, according to Ginkler. From certain fragments of the Bostonian's work that were extant in Ginkler's day, that acute historian inferred that life insurance was free from the base practices characterizing kindred forms of gambling, and that the care and investment of its profits were a trust honorably administered by those having them in custody—whom the elder author names. It is no small distinction to have been chosen by one's country's gods to instate in the seats of honor the philanthropists and benefactors worthy to sit in what the greatest and most original of our contemporary poets has called,

"The fierce light that beats upon a throne."



# SOLDIERS *and* GHOSTS



By AMBROSE BIERCE

*Illustrated by Charles B. Falls*

## A Baffled Ambuscade



CONNECTING Readyville and Woodbury was a good, hard turnpike nine or ten miles long. Readyville was an outpost of the Federal army at Murfreesboro; Woodbury had the same relation to the Confederate army at Tullahoma. For many months after the battle at Stone River (Murfreesboro) these outposts were in constant quarrel, most of the "trouble" occurring, naturally, on the turnpike mentioned, between detachments of cavalry. Sometimes the infantry and artillery took a hand in the game, by way of showing their good-will. A true history of those spirited encounters would make an interesting book.

One night a squadron of Federal horse commanded by Major Seidel, a gallant and skillful officer, moved out from Readyville on an uncommonly hazardous enterprise requiring secrecy, caution, and silence. Conversation was forbidden; arms and accouterments were denied the right to rattle. The horses' tramping was all that could be heard, and the movement was slow in order to have as little as possible of that. It was after midnight and pretty dark, although there was a bit of moon somewhere behind the masses of cloud.

Passing the infantry pickets, the detachment soon afterward approached two cavalry videttes staring hard into the darkness ahead. There should have been three.

"Where is your other man?" whispered the major. "I ordered Dunning to be here to-night."

"He rode forward, sir," the man replied. "There was a little firing afterward, but it was a long way to the front."

"It was against orders and against sense for Dunning to do that," said the officer, obviously vexed. "Why did he ride forward?"

"Don't know, sir; he seemed mighty restless. Guess he was skeered."

When this remarkable logician and his companion had been absorbed into the expeditionary force, it resumed its advance. Two or three miles further along, the head of the column approached a dense forest of cedars bordering the road on both sides. The major commanded a halt by merely halting, and, evidently himself a bit "skeered," rode on alone to reconnoiter. He was followed, however, by his adjutant and three troopers, who remained a little distance behind and, unseen by him, saw all that occurred.

After riding about a hundred yards toward the forest, the major suddenly and sharply reined in his horse and sat motionless in the saddle. Near the side of the road, in a little open space, stood the figure of a man, dimly visible and as motionless as he. The major's first feeling was that of satisfaction in having left his cavalcade behind; if this were an enemy and should escape he would have little to report. The expedition was as yet undetected.

Some dark object was dimly discernible at the man's feet; the officer could not make it out. With the instinct of the true cavalryman and a particular indisposition to the discharge of firearms, he drew his saber. The man on foot made no movement in answer to the challenge. The situation was tense and a bit dramatic. Suddenly the moon burst through a rift in the clouds, and, himself in the shadow of a group of great



oaks, the horseman saw the footman clearly, in a patch of white light and hardly five paces away. It was Trooper Dunning, unarmed and bareheaded, his face showing a great gout of blood. The dark object at his feet resolved itself into a dead horse, and at a right angle across the animal's neck lay a dead man, face upward in the moonlight.

"Dunning has had the fight of his life," thought the major, and was about to ride forward. Dunning raised his hand, motioning him back with a gesture of warning; then, lowering the arm, he pointed to the place where the road lost itself in the blackness of the cedar forest.

The major understood, and, turning his horse, rode back to the little group that had followed him and was already moving to the rear in fear of his displeasure, and so returned to the head of his command.

"Dunning is just ahead there," he said to the captain of his leading company. "He has killed his man, and will have something to report."

Right patiently they waited, sabers drawn, but Dunning did not report. In an hour the day broke, and the whole force moved cautiously forward, its commander not altogether satisfied with his faith in Private Dunning. The expedition had failed, but something remained to be done.

In the little open space off the road they found the fallen horse. At a right angle across the animal's neck, face upward and defiled with a great gout of blood from a bullet in the brain, lay the body of Trooper Dunning, stiff as a statue, hours dead.

Examination disclosed abundant evidence that within a quarter-hour the cedar forest had been occupied by a strong force of Confederate infantry—an ambushade.

## Two Military Executions



IN the spring of the year 1862 General Buell's army lay at Nashville, licking itself into shape for the campaign which resulted in the victory at Shiloh. It was a raw, untrained army, although some of its fractions had seen hard enough service, with a good deal of fighting, in the mountains of Western Virginia, and in Kentucky. The war was young and soldiering a new industry, imperfectly understood by the young American of the period, who found some features of it not altogether to his liking. Chief among these was that essential part of discipline, subordination. To one imbued from infancy with the fascinating fallacy that all men are born equal, unquestioning submission to authority is not easily mastered, and the American soldier in his "green and salad days" is among the worst known. That is how it happened that one of Buell's men, Private John Bennett Greene, committed the indiscretion of striking his officer. Later in the war he would not have done that; like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, he would have "seen him damned" first. But time for reformation of his military manners was denied him: he was promptly arrested on complaint of the officer, tried by court-martial, and sentenced to be shot.

"You might have thrashed me and let it go at that," said the condemned man to the complaining witness; "that is what you used to do at school, when you were plain Will Dudley and I was as good as you. Nobody saw me strike you; discipline would not have suffered much."

"John Greene, I guess you are right about that," said the lieutenant. "Will you forgive me? That is what I came to see you about."

There was no reply, and an officer, putting his head in at the door of the guard-tent, explained that the time allowed for the interview had expired. The next morning, when in the presence of the whole brigade Private John Greene was shot to death by a squad of his comrades, Lieutenant Dudley turned his back upon the sorry performance, and muttered a prayer for mercy in which himself was included.

A few weeks afterward, as Buell's leading division was being ferried over the Tennessee River to assist in succoring Grant's beaten army, night was coming on, black and stormy. Through the wreck of battle the division moved, inch by inch, in the direction of the enemy, who had withdrawn a little to reform his lines. But for the lightning the darkness was absolute. Never for a moment did it cease to rain, and never when the thunder did not crack and roar





IT WAS TROOPER DUNNING. THE DARK OBJECT AT HIS FEET RESOLVED ITSELF INTO A DEAD HORSE, AND ACROSS THE ANIMAL'S NECK LAY A DEAD MAN

were unheard the moans of the wounded among whom the men felt their way with their feet, and upon whom they stumbled in the gloom. The dead were there too—oh, there were dead a-plenty.

In the first faint gray of the morning,

when the swarming advance had paused to resume something of definition as a line of battle, and skirmishers had been thrown forward, word was passed along to call the roll. The first sergeant of Lieutenant Dudley's company stepped to the front and



began to name the men in alphabetical order. He had no written roll, but a good memory. The men answered to their names as he ran down the alphabet to G.

"Gorham."

"Here!"

"Grayrock."

"Here!"

The sergeant's good memory was affected by habit:

"Greene."

"Here!"

The response was clear, distinct, unmistakable!

A visible movement, an agitation of the entire company front, as from an electric shock, attested the startling character of the incident. The sergeant paled and paused. The captain strode quickly to his side and said sharply,

"Call that name again."

Apparently the Society for Psychical Research is not first in the field of curiosity concerning the Unknown.

"John Greene."

"Here!"

All faces turned in the direction of the familiar voice; the two men between whom

in the order of stature John Greene had commonly stood in line squarely confronted each other.

"Once more," commanded the inexorable investigator, and once more came—a trifle tremulously—the name of the dead man:

"John Bennett Greene."

"Here!"

At that instant a single rifle-shot rang out from the obscurity away to the front beyond the skirmish-line, followed, almost attended, by the savage hiss of an approaching bullet, which, passing overhead, struck audibly, punctuating as with a full stop the captain's exclamation, "What the devil does it mean?"

Lieutenant Dudley pushed through the ranks from his place in the rear.

"It means this," he said, throwing open his coat and displaying a visibly broadening stain of crimson on his breast. His knees gave way; he fell awkwardly and lay dead.

A little later the regiment was ordered out of line to relieve the congested front, and through some misplay in the game of battle was not again under fire. Nor did John Greene, expert in military executions, ever again signify his presence at one.



"IT MEANS THIS," HE SAID, THROWING OPEN HIS COAT





## THE DREADFUL DARK

By JAMES J. MONTAGUE

When the bonfires burn in the twilight skies  
And the clouds are all rimmed with red,  
The bold little hunter, with round, brave eyes,  
Is tucked in his trundle-bed.

Then the old crow, Night, from his dusky wings  
Shakes the shadowy gloom, and—hark!  
To the stealthy steps of the wolves and things  
That prowl through the dreadful dark.

The wolves that the little boy meant to slay  
When next he should take the trail,  
The slippery snakes that would slink away  
And the bears that would cringe and quail  
Are back of the bureau, and under the bed,  
And crouching behind the chair;  
Though the counterpane covers his curly head,  
The hunter can feel them there.

Nearer and nearer the creatures creep  
Through the shadows along the floor,  
Till they vanish at last in a mist of sleep,  
And lo! it is day once more.

Oh! little boy hunter, to share those fears  
And their shuddery joys with you,  
I'd give—but who can turn back the years  
And drink their delights anew?



# The Moonlit Road

By Ambrose Bierce

Illustrated by CHARLES B. FALLS

## I—STATEMENT OF JOHN HETMAN, JR.



I AM the most unfortunate of men. Rich, respected, fairly well educated, and of sound health—with many of the advantages usually valued by those having them and coveted by those who have them not—I sometimes think that I should be less unhappy if they had been denied me, for then the contrast between my outer and my inner life would not be continually claiming a painful attention. In the stress of privation and the need of effort I might sometimes forget the somber secret ever baffling the conjecture that it compels.

I am the only child of my parents, John and Julia Hetman. The one was a well-to-do country gentleman, the other a beautiful and accomplished woman to whom he was passionately attached with what I now know to have been a jealous and exacting devotion. The family home was a few miles outside Nashville, Tennessee, a large, irregularly built dwelling of no particular order of architecture, a little way off the road, in a park of trees and shrubbery. At the time of which I write I was nineteen years old, a student at Yale.

One day I received a telegram from my father of such urgency that in compliance with its unexplained demand I left at once for home. At the railway station in Nashville a distant relative awaited me to apprise me of the reason for my recall: my mother had been barbarously murdered—why and by whom none could conjecture. My father had gone to Nashville, intending to return the next afternoon. Something prevented his accomplishing the business in hand, so he returned on the same night, arriving just before the dawn.

In his testimony before the coroner he explained that, having no latchkey and not

caring to disturb the sleeping servants, he had, with no clearly defined intention, gone round to the rear of the house. As he turned an angle of the building, he heard a sound as of a door gently closed, and saw in the darkness indistinctly the figure of a man, which instantly disappeared among the trees of the lawn. A hasty pursuit and brief search of the grounds, in the belief that the trespasser was some one secretly visiting a servant, proving fruitless, he entered at the unlocked door and mounted the stairs to my mother's chamber. Its door was open, and he, stepping into black darkness, fell headlong over some heavy object on the floor. I may spare myself the details; it was my poor mother, dead of strangulation by human hands!

Nothing had been taken from the house, the servants had heard no sound, and excepting those terrible finger-marks upon the dead woman's throat—dear God! that I might forget them!—no trace of the assassin was ever found.

I gave up my studies and remained with my father, who, naturally, was greatly changed. Always of a silent, saturnine disposition, he now fell into so deep a dejection that nothing could hold his attention, yet anything—a footfall, the sudden closing of a door—aroused in him a fitful interest—one might have called it an apprehension. At any small surprise of the senses he would start visibly and sometimes turn pale, then relapse into a melancholy apathy deeper than before. I suppose he was what is called a "nervous wreck." As for me, I was younger then than now—there is much in that. Youth is Gilead, in which is balm for every wound. Ah, that I might again dwell in that enchanted land! Unacquainted with grief, I knew not how to appraise my bereavement; I could not rightly estimate the strength and terror of the stroke.

One night, a few months after the dreadful event, my father and I walked home from the city. The full moon was only





HARDLY HAD MY SHAKING HAND FOUND THE DOOR-KNOB WHEN—MERCIFUL HEAVEN!—I HEARD  
IT RETURNING

about three hours above the horizon, but the entire countryside had the solemn stillness of a summer midnight; our footfalls and the ceaseless song of the katydids were the only sounds aloof. Black shadows of bordering trees lay athwart the road, which, in the short reaches between, gleamed a ghostly white. As we approached the gate to our dwelling, whose front was in shadow, and in which no light shone, my father suddenly stopped and clutched my arm, saying, hardly above his breath:

"God! God! what is that?"

"I hear nothing," I replied.

"But see—see!" he said, pointing along the road, directly ahead.

I said: "Nothing is there. Come, father, let us go in—you are ill."

He had released my arm and was standing rigid and motionless in the center of the illuminated roadway, staring like one bereft of sense. His face in the moonlight showed a pallor and fixity inexpressibly distressing. I pulled gently at his sleeve, but he had forgotten my existence. Presently he began to retire backward, step by step, never for an instant removing his eyes from what he saw, or thought he saw. I turned half round to follow, but stood irresolute. I do not recall any feeling of fear, unless a sudden chill was its physical manifestation. It seemed as if an icy wind had touched my



face and enfolded my body from head to foot; I could feel the stir of it in my hair.

At that moment my attention was drawn to a light that suddenly streamed from an upper window of the house: one of the servants, awakened by what mysterious premonition of evil who can say, and in obedience to an impulse that she was never able to name, had lit a lamp. When I turned to look for my father he was gone, and in all the years that have passed no whisper of his fate has come across the borderland of conjecture from the realm of the unknown.

## II.—STATEMENT OF CASPAR GRATTAN

To-day I am said to live; to-morrow, here in this room, will lie a senseless shape of clay that all too long was I. And if anyone lift the cloth from the face of that unpleasant thing, it will be in gratification of a mere morbid curiosity. Some, doubtless, will go farther and inquire, "Who was he?" In this writing I supply the only answer that I am able to make—Caspar Grattan. Surely, that should be enough; it has served my small need for more than twenty years of a life of unknown length. True, I gave it to myself, but lacking another I had the right. In this world one must have a name; it prevents confusion, even when it does not establish identity. Some, though, are known by numbers, which also seem inadequate distinctions.

One day I was passing along a street of a city, far from here, when I met two men similarly clad, one of whom, half pausing and looking curiously into my face, said to his companion, "That chap looks like 767." Something in the number seemed familiar and horrible. Moved by an uncontrollable impulse, I sprang into a side street and ran until I fell exhausted in a country lane.

I have never forgotten that number, and always it comes to memory attended by gibbering obscenity, peals of joyless laughter, the clang of iron doors. So I say a name, even if self-bestowed, is better than a number. In the register of the potter's field I shall soon have both. What wealth!

Of him who shall find this paper I must beg a little consideration. It is not the history of my life; the knowledge to write that is denied me. This is only a record of broken and apparently unrelated memories, some of them distinct and sequent,

like brilliant beads upon a thread, others remote and strange, having the character of crimson dreams with interspaces blank and black—witch-fires glowing still and red in a great desolation.

Standing upon the shore of eternity, I turn for a last look landward over the course by which I came. There are twenty years of footprints fairly distinct, the impressions of bleeding feet. They lead through poverty and pain, devious and unsure, as of one staggering beneath a burden—

"Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow."

Ah, the poet's prophecy of Me—how admirable, how dreadfully admirable!

Backward beyond the beginning of this *via dolorosa*—this epic of suffering with episodes of sin—I see nothing clearly: it comes out of a cloud. I know that it spans only twenty years, yet I am an old man.

One does not remember one's birth—one has to be told. But with me it was different; life came to me full-handed and dowered me with all my faculties and powers. Of a previous existence I know no more than others, for all have stammering intimations that may be memories and may be dreams. I know only that my first consciousness was of maturity in body and mind—a consciousness accepted without surprise or conjecture. I merely found myself walking in a forest, half-clad, footsore, unutterably weary and hungry. Seeing a farmhouse, I approached and asked for food, which was given me by one who inquired my name. I did not know, yet knew that all had names. Greatly embarrassed, I retired and, night coming on, lay down in the forest and slept.

The next day I entered a large town which I shall not name. Nor shall I recount further incidents of the life that is now to end—a life of wandering, always and everywhere haunted by an overmastering sense of crime in punishment of wrong, and of terror in punishment of crime. Let me see if I can reduce it to narrative.

I seem once to have lived near a great city, a prosperous planter, married to a woman whom I loved and suspected. We had, it sometimes seems, one child, a youth of brilliant parts and promise. He is at all times a vague figure, never clearly drawn, frequently altogether out of the picture.

One luckless day it occurred to me to test my wife's fidelity in a vulgar, commonplace way familiar to everyone who has acquaintance with the literature of fact and fiction.



I went to the city, telling my wife that I should be absent until the following afternoon. But I returned before daybreak and went to the rear of the house, purposing to enter by a door with which I had secretly so tampered that it would seem to lock, yet not actually fasten. As I approached it, I heard it gently open and close, and saw a man steal away into the darkness. With murder in my heart, I sprang after him, but he had vanished without even the bad luck of identification.

Crazed with jealousy and rage, blind and bestial with all the elemental passions of insulted manhood, I entered the house and sprang up the stairs to the door of my wife's chamber. It was closed, but having tampered with its lock also, I easily entered, and despite the black darkness soon stood by the side of her bed. My groping hands told me that, although disarranged, it was unoccupied.

"She is below," I thought, "and terrified by my entrance has evaded me in the hall."

With the purpose of seeking her, I turned to leave the room, but took a wrong direction—the right one. My foot struck her, cowering in a corner of the room. Instantly my hands were at her throat, stifling a shriek, my knees were upon her struggling body, and there in the darkness, without a word of accusation or reproach, I strangled her till she died!

There ends the dream. I have related it in the past tense, but the present would be the fitter form, for again and again the somber tragedy reenacts itself in my consciousness—over and over I lay the plan, I suffer the confirmation, I redress the wrong. Then all is blank, and afterward the rains beat against the grimy window-panes, or the snows fall upon my scant attire, the wheels rattle in the squalid streets where my life lies in poverty and mean employment. If there is ever sunshine, I do not recall it; if there are birds, they do not sing.

There is another dream, another vision of the night. I stand among the shadows in a moonlit road. I am conscious of another presence, but whose I cannot rightly determine. In the shadow of a great dwelling I catch the gleam of white garments; then the figure of a woman confronts me in the road—my murdered wife! There is death in the face; there are marks upon the throat. The eyes are fixed on mine with an infinite gravity which is not reproach, nor hate, nor

menace, nor anything less terrible than recognition. Before this awful apparition I retire in terror—a terror that is upon me as I write. I can no longer rightly shape the words. See! they—

Now I am calm, but truly there was no more to tell: the incident ends where it began—in darkness and in doubt.

Yes, I am again in control of myself, "the captain of my soul." But that is not respite; it is another stage and phase of expiation. My penance, constant in degree, is mutable in kind: one of its variants is tranquillity. After all, it is only a life-sentence. "To hell for life"—that is a fool penalty: the culprit chooses the duration of his punishment. To-day my term expires.

To each and all, the peace that was not mine.

### III.—STATEMENT OF THE LATE JULIA HETMAN THROUGH THE MEDIUM BAYROLLES

I had retired early and fallen almost immediately into a dreamless sleep, from which I awoke with that vague, indefinable sense of peril which is, I think, a common experience in that other, earlier life. Of its unmeaning character, too, I was entirely persuaded, yet that did not banish it. My husband was away from home; the servants slept in another part of the house. But these were familiar conditions; they had never before distressed me. Nevertheless, the strange terror grew so insupportable that, conquering my reluctance to move, I sat up and lit the lamp at my bedside. Contrary to my expectation, this gave me no relief; the light seemed rather an added danger, for I reflected that it would shine out under the door, disclosing my presence to whatever evil thing might lurk outside. You that are still in the flesh, subject to horrors of the imagination, think what a monstrous fear that must be which seeks in darkness security from malevolent existences of the night. That is to spring to close quarters with an unseen enemy—the strategy of despair!

Extinguishing the lamp, I pulled the bed-clothing about my head and lay trembling and silent, unable to shriek, forgetful to pray. In this pitiable state I must have lain for what you call hours—with us there are no hours, there is no time.

At last it came—a soft, irregular sound of footfalls on the stairs! They were



slow, hesitant, uncertain, as of something that did not see its way; to my disordered reason all the more terrifying for that, as the approach of some blind and mindless malevolence to which is no appeal. I even thought that I must have left the hall lamp burning and the groping of this creature proved it a monster of the night. This was foolish and inconsistent with my previous dread of the light, but what would you have? Fear has no brains; it is an idiot. The dismal witness that it bears and the coward counsel that it whispers are unrelated. We know this well, we who have passed into the Realm of Terror, who skulk in eternal dusk among the scenes of our former lives, invisible even to ourselves and one another, yet hiding forlorn in lonely places; yearning for speech with our loved ones, yet dumb, and as fearful of them as they of us. Sometimes the disability is removed, the law suspended: by the deathless power of love or hate we break the spell—we are seen by those whom we would warn, console, or punish. What form we seem to them to bear we know not; we know only that we terrify even those whom we most wish to comfort and from whom we most crave tenderness and sympathy.

Forgive, I pray you, this inconsequent digression by what was once a woman. You who consult us in this imperfect way—you do not understand. You ask foolish questions about things unknown and things forbidden. Much that we know and could impart in our speech is meaningless in yours. We must communicate with you through a stammering intelligence in that small fraction of our language that you yourselves can speak. You think that we are of another world. No, we have knowledge of no world but yours, though for us it holds no sunlight, no warmth, no music, no laughter, no song of birds, nor any companionship. O God! what a thing it is to be a ghost, cowering and shivering in an altered world, a prey to apprehension and despair!

No, I did not die of fright: the Thing turned and went away. I heard it go down the stairs, hurriedly, I thought, as if itself in sudden fear. Then I rose to call for help. Hardly had my shaking hand found the door-knob when—merciful heaven!—I heard it returning. Its footfalls as it remounted the stairs were rapid, heavy, and loud; they shook the house. I fled to an angle of the wall and crouched upon the

floor. I tried to pray. I tried to call the name of my dear husband. Then I heard the door thrown open. There was an interval of unconsciousness, and when I revived I felt a strangling clutch upon my throat—felt my arms feebly beating against something that bore me backward—felt my tongue thrusting itself from between my teeth! And then I passed into this life.

No, I have no knowledge of what it was. The sum of what we knew at death is the measure of what we know afterward of all that went before. Of this existence we know many things, but no new light falls upon any page of that; in memory is written all of it that we can read. Here are no heights of truth overlooking the confused landscape of that dubitable domain. We still dwell in the Valley of the Shadow, lurk in its desolate places, peering from brambles and thickets at its mad, malign inhabitants. How should we have new knowledge of that fading past?

What I am about to relate happened on a night. We know when it is night, for then you retire to your houses and we can venture from our places of concealment to move unafraid about our old homes, to look in at the windows, even to enter and gaze upon your faces as you sleep. For weeks I had lingered near the dwelling where I had been so cruelly changed to what I am, as we do while any that we love or hate remain. Vainly I had sought some method of manifestation, some way to make my continued existence and my great love and poignant pity understood by my husband and son. Always if they slept they would wake, or if in my desperation I dared approach them when they were awake, would turn toward me the terrible eyes of the living, frightening me by the glances that I sought from the purpose that I held.

On this night I had searched for them without success, and fearing to find them; they were nowhere in the house, nor about the moonlit lawn. For, although the sun is lost to us forever, the moon, full-orbed or slender, remains to us. Sometimes it shines by night, sometimes by day, but always it rises and sets, as in that other life. I left the lawn and moved in the white light and silence along the road, aimless and sorrowing. Suddenly I heard the voice of my poor husband in exclamations of astonishment, with that of my son in reassurance and dissuasion; and there in the shadow of a





THEIR FACES WERE TOWARD ME, THE EYES OF THE ELDER MAN FIXED UPON MINE. HE SAW ME—AT LAST, AT LAST, HE SAW ME!

group of trees they stood—near, so near! Their faces were toward me, the eyes of the elder man fixed upon mine. He saw me—at last, at last, he saw me! In the consciousness of that, my terror fled as a cruel dream. The death-spell was broken: Love had conquered Law. Mad with exultation I shouted—I *must* have shouted, “He sees, he sees: he will understand!” Then, controlling myself, I moved forward, smiling and consciously beautiful, to offer myself to his arms, to comfort him with endearments,

and, with my son’s hand in mine, to speak words that should restore the broken bonds between the living and the dead.

Alas! alas! his face went white with fear, his eyes were as those of a hunted animal. He backed away from me, as I advanced, and at last turned and fled into the wood—whither, it is not given to me to know.

To my poor boy, left doubly desolate, I have never been able to impart a sense of my presence. Soon he, too, must pass to the Invisible and be lost to me forever.





# An Up-to-Date Fairy Tale

THE VERACIOUS STORY OF SOME TRULY REMARKABLE ADVENTURES EXPERIENCED BY A MAN WHO, THROUGH NO FAULT OF HIS OWN, WAS REDUCED TO A HEIGHT OF ONE INCH

By Perriton Maxwell

Illustrated from photographs by the Author



THE doctor meditatively wagged his shock of snowdrift hair and pulled a grave countenance. He was a rosy, rotund cherub of sixty-three, with a laugh that bubbled up straight from his heart. He exuded health, and to his patients he was the living symbol of optimism, the soul of good cheer. No one could remain ill very long under his skillful care; in thirty-one years of daily practice he had had less than half a score of patients whose ailments had reached beyond his power of healing. But now there was a solemn shade on his ruddy old mask and an unquiet look in his eye. Evidently he believed me to be asleep, which, indeed, I should have been after the exhausting physical examination I had just endured at his hands.

From my vantage-point beneath the coverlet of the bed, I saw and heard everything which transpired about me—saw and heard too much for my peace of mind. I scented danger in the doctor's unnatural sobriety of manner. "A badly complicated case of appendicitis," I heard him tell my wife.

"The devil!" I muttered to myself. "Still, I suppose I should be thankful it isn't something worse."

"Is it so serious, then?" tremulously whispered my wife.

"Not so serious, little woman, but that we'll have him on his pins again in a week or two. But," and he lingered unreasonably long on the word, "he will have to undergo an operation, and at once."

Immediately I lost interest in my own welfare. Nothing counted after that pronounce-

ment of doom. If they were going to pry me open like a can of beef and play hide-and-seek with the inner man of me while I lay foolishly weak and powerless, there surely was no further use for life. In my own mind I was already confined. Always I had entertained a robust horror of the knife. I owned to a fixed theory that a certain large percentage of sick men and women went down into premature graves, butchered on the surgeon's table.

My mental discomfiture was as poignant as my physical pain was intense when, after a night of fever and fantastic dreams, I awoke next morning to realize that all preparations for removing me to the hospital had been made. I was actually on my way to the block, there to be man-handled and cut up for the crime of having a wilful vermiform appendix.

After a hideous nightmare of a ride to the hospital in a stuffy, jolting cab, and but a brief rest upon arriving there, I eventually found myself, like a trussed chicken on a platter, laid out upon a slablike table bristling with thumb-screws and brass tilting devices; it was not unlike one of those torture-racks used in a remoter day for victims less innocent, perhaps, than myself. The group of young doctors gathered about my prostrate form seemed to be very jocular indeed over my helplessness, perhaps my approaching death. They had absolutely no sense of the importance of the moment as I felt it.

"It will be over in a jiffy," said one of my smiling assassins, a spectacled chap with a blond beard, as he adjusted a cone-shaped something over my face. I was inhaling ether, and there was no backing out of it now. The ordeal was on. I felt myself slid-



ing out of the world, slipping the harness of life, gliding with terrible swiftness down an interminable chute. Faster and faster I sped along the endless death-slide. Then I rebelled. I tried to clutch the sides of the chute, grabbed ineffectually at the polished, unyielding surface under me, and vainly dug my heels into it. I realized that my struggles were useless—the far-away confusion of voices convinced me of that. Something seemed to tug at my vitals, and there was a dim consciousness of pain, but this I lightly laughed away, for I suddenly became aware that *it was not my pain*, but belonged to

some one else—to the blond assassin who called himself a surgeon, to the uniformed attendant at the door, to the colored porter whom we had passed in the corridor, to the white-capped nurse with the violet eyes. The pain was there in *my* side—oh, yes, there was no doubt of that, but some one else *felt* it. It was a huge joke, and I knew I was the only person in the whole great universe that could appreciate or even understand it.

Then the desire to rise from my uncomfortable position on the operating-table came upon me with compelling force. I knew I



"I SAW THE SHADOW OF AN ENORMOUS FOOT AND FELT A RUSH OF AIR"





"A VAWNING CHASM, TO FALL INTO WHICH MEANT AT LEAST A BROKEN NECK."

was required to lie perfectly quiet, but I seemed to be alone in the midst of an all-enveloping white vapor. You may imagine my astonishment when I found the task of rising from the slab no more difficult than getting out of a chair.

After stretching myself to loosen up my joints I started across what I supposed was the floor of the operating-chamber. It was a strange sensation to come suddenly to the end of the floor, and peering over the edge, to see a sheer drop of some fifty feet or more to the level of what seemed to be the story below. I could not quite bring my reason to focus true on the situation. I had only the consciousness of an enormous human countenance with a huge blond beard peering at me from out a vast impenetrable whiteness, a fog of infinity. I tried to shake off the foolish illusion, but it would not be shaken. Then I lost reason completely, tossed discretion to the winds, and made a plunge into space over the edge of the floor, down, down, down!

Did you ever fall from a great height? Probably not; it is not a popular pastime. But if you have, you will recognize the sen-

sation of passing swiftly through a tube of rapidly solidifying air—air that envelops you and shrieks in your ears as it folds you tighter and tighter in its embrace. You have only one thought while you are falling—you wonder how soon you will strike the bottom of the impalpable air-tube.

It came almost at the moment the question formed itself in my mind. I felt the heavy jar of my body when it came in violent contact with the ground, and wondered how much of me was left unbroken. It is a strange fact but a true one that I escaped unharmed. I had struck upon a mound of something soft and yielding—something like a mountain of piled-up linen, if you can imagine such a thing. I struggled out of the folds of the yielding mass, and finally reached the floor.

I do not know how the realization was brought home to me, nor what inspired me to see the truth as it was, but all at once I knew I was not of normal proportions. I had shrunk into a man of incredible diminutiveness. I was standing beside the walking-stick of one of the hospital inspectors, and I recognized the cane immediately from

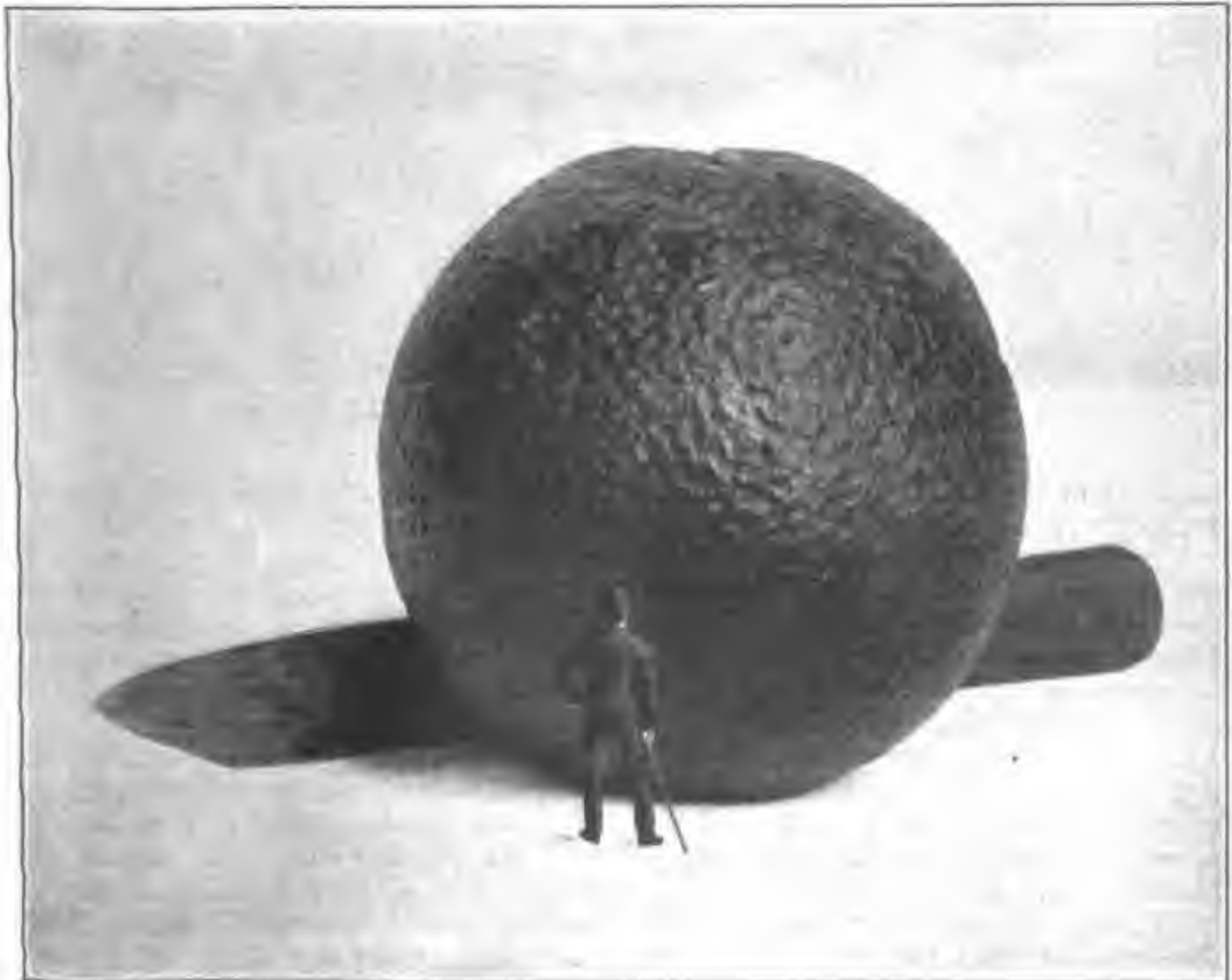


the peculiar wood of which it was made. It now towered above my head like an attenuated Eiffel Tower, but it enabled me to gage my height, and I discovered that I stood from the ground but little higher than the ferrule. *I was one inch tall!* I do not think I ever harbored any foolish notions about my own importance in the world. The entire human race is but a mere swarm of ants crawling about on the little terrestrial golf-ball we call the earth. But to find oneself suddenly reduced to the dimensions of a healthy grasshopper, without that creature's splendid mechanism for locomotion, is to feel small indeed. I brought all of my philosophy to bear on the situation, however, consoling myself with the thought that there were other living and useful creatures still smaller than myself, and set out to seek further adventures.

Everything now took on an interesting and unusual appearance; the most common objects of daily life assumed the appearance of gigantic curiosities. A medicine-case

looked to me like a big house of eccentric architecture; a dust-heap in a corner of the great room swarmed with infinitesimal bits of animal life which, I was sure, could not be discerned by the eye of a normal man.

One thing reconciled me to my strange predicament—I was free to go wheresoever I pleased, without let or hindrance. I stood for a moment in the shadow of a porcelain basin which rested on the floor, and watched with zest the passing of several pairs of giant legs. It gave me a peculiar sensation to see first one huge foot and a trousered leg rise high in the air and swing over the floor with the force of a flying mountain, to be immediately followed by the other leg performing a like miracle. And when a human foot came down upon the floor, it was like a crash of thunder in my Lilliputian eardrums. My curiosity in this novel exhibition of walking came near costing me my life. I had ventured out from the safe shelter of a chair-leg to pass under a distant table, when from another part of the room a



"THE GREAT SPHERE I RECOGNIZED AFTER CLOSER SCRUTINY AS AN ORANGE"



man started hurriedly in my direction, walking with long strides. Run as I might, the monster feet came crashing toward me, nor could I find any convenient object near at hand under which to dodge. In an instant I saw the shadow of an enormous foot and felt a rush of air. Instinctively I dropped to the floor and flattened out upon it. The great mass of creaking leather passed completely over me. I escaped being crushed into pulp only because the heel and sole of the Brobdingnagian boot had struck the floor directly in front and back of me and I

I finally made out to be a common derby hat turned brim uppermost on the table. Up the curving side of the hat I clambered, digging toes and fingers into the yielding felt, and swung safely over the brim. Carefully I crawled to the edge of the inner rim and peered down into the abyss. It was like looking into the mouth of a crater—a yawning chasm of darkness, to fall into which meant at least a broken neck. I lost no time in getting back to the more solid footing of the table-top.

Walking a few paces, I was presently con-



"I GAZED OVER INTO A CRUMBLING FORMATION OF HOT ASHES"

sprawled in the hollow of the sole which arched for an instant above.

The passing of my recent danger had no further effect, when I was fully recovered, than to embolden me to test my diminutive powers. Accordingly I essayed the climbing of a table-leg which loomed in my path like the trunk of a California redwood. How I reached the top I scarcely know, but reach it I did. The wood of the table was far rougher on the surface than it probably appeared in the eyes of ordinary mortals. I remember that for some space of time I hung perilously upon the table's edge like one swinging from the ledge of a sheer mountain face. When I gained the top my curiosity led me to a big, black object which

fronted with a huge, round object covered with glistening yellow excrescences like polished knobs of brass. On the other side of the giant ball was a case-knife of the kitchen or tool-box variety, and this seemed as large as a steel girder. The great sphere I recognized after closer scrutiny as an orange.

Noticing a champagne-glass standing like a Crystal Palace some distance away, I made for it and wondered if it were possible to scale its slippery sides. No sooner the thought than I threw aside my coat and made an attempt to reach the edge. After many discouraging efforts, I at last grasped the smooth, round brim at the top and sat astride of it, balancing in mid-air. For





"I STRUCK OUT FOR A SIDE OF THE GLASS, SWIMMING VALIANTLY"





"I MADE A HEADLONG DASH DOWN THE END OF THE KEYBOARD"

some purpose the glass had been filled with water; it had the appearance of a rather muddy lake as seen from my uncertain perch. How it happened I never precisely knew, but of a sudden I was floundering around in this sluggish pool, more wet than frightened. I think I was blown into the water by the onrush of air from a near-by door that had been flung open. I struck out for a side of the glass, swimming valiantly enough, but finding it more difficult with each attempt to get a firm hold on the slippery side. Suffice it to say that, like a drenched rat, I finally made my way from what threatened to be a watery tomb.

Since I seemed doomed to hairbreadth escapes that day, I no longer shrank from any object, no matter how unfamiliar or re-

pulsive a front it presented to my new line of vision. Naturally, therefore, when I saw at a far corner of the table an ugly mass of dark stuff belching fire and smoke at one end, which end projected out into space, I directed my steps toward it. The extreme point opposite that which was aflame had evidently been saturated with water and then beaten and hacked at until it was shredded and pulpy. The object, I found, when I had crawled up its crackling side and sat on the top, was of cylindrical form and exuded a pungent odor. Near the burning end I gazed over into a crumbling formation of hot ashes from which arose the most stifling fumes. The odor I recognized at once—it was a cigar and, I am frank to say, not a very good one. Indeed, I remem-



bered it as one of my own cigars which, in my former state, I had left upon the table-edge on my way into the surgeon's hands. The odor was so nauseous and the smoke so rank that I decided if I were permitted by kind Providence to grow up again and mingle with my fellows I would change the brand or quit smoking.

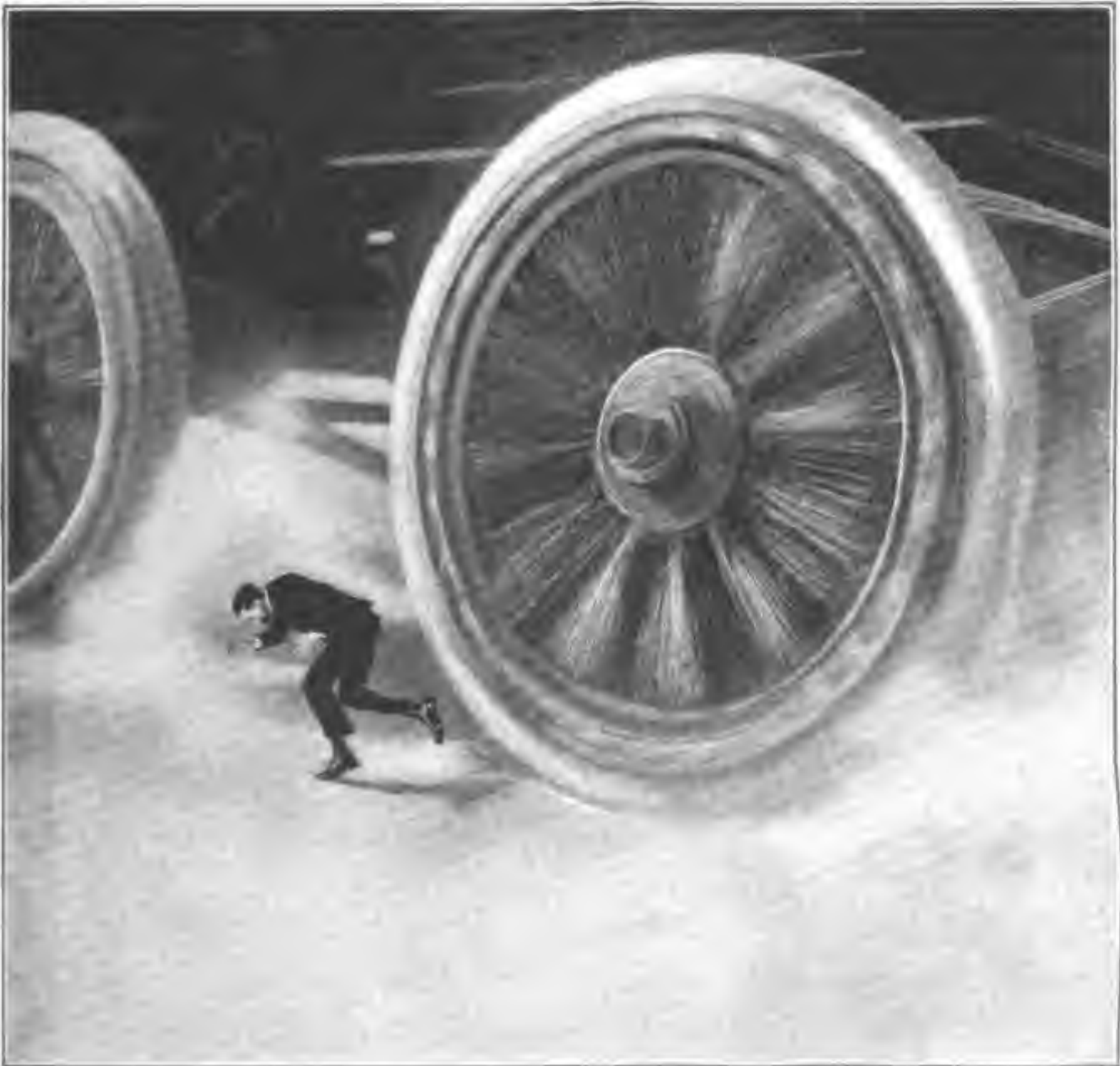
After a long rest I slid down from the table and, seeing an open door, crawled over the sill and traveled through a long hall into another room.

Near by was the elaborately carved pilaster of an upright piano. This I climbed quite easily. I recognized the huge white and black keys, though the latter had every aspect of covered scows uniformly anchored in a sea of frozen ivory. By jumping vigorously upon the keys I found that I could

produce a fine rumble of sound away back somewhere in the cavernous black box.

While I was thus amusing myself I heard a swish of feminine skirts and clambered off the keyboard behind the drop cover where I might safely view the plump woman-giant who came straight toward the piano. Seating herself, she struck a vibrant chord upon the keys, which nearly split my ears. It was like a clap of thunder intermingled with the varied shrieks of a dozen sirens. I knew the awful vibrations would kill me if I did not escape at once, and I made a headlong dash down the end of the keyboard. I fully expected to hear a woman's shriek of fear, but my fair pianist must have been too much engrossed in her music-making to see me.

After landing on the carpet, panting and disheveled, I scurried over the door-sill and



"A TORNADO THAT LIFTED ME OFF MY FEET AND FLUNG ME HEADLONG TO THE PAVEMENT"



out in the long hall. Keeping close to the wall, I groped my way to the front door of the hospital, which had been left ajar by a careless attendant, and in a few fearful minutes was out in the open. Dropping from stone step to stone step down the broad front stoop, I soon found myself on the sidewalk, and moved toward the curb. As I stood speculating upon the size of the paving-blocks, there descended upon me out of nowhere, it seemed, a tornado that lifted me off my feet and flung me headlong to the pavement. I had barely time to catch sight of two enormous wheels, rubber-tired and revolving with lightning rapidity, and I knew that I had been caught in the breeze and dust of a passing motor car. Surely the street was no place for me if I valued the tiny spark of life that was mine, and I ran for a small restaurant down the street.

The pangs of hunger were keen within me when I reached the restaurant door, and the smell of food, though overpowering, was good in my nostrils. The place was one of the cheapest and of uncleanly character. I saw a hulking German drayman at a table near the kitchen entrance; he was eating something soft with a spoon, half closing his eyes with each satisfying mouthful. Clam-

bering up the leg of his table, I reached the edge of his platter and leaned forward to taste some of the mushy food with which he was gorging himself, when my foot slipped and into the slimy mess, heels over head, I plunged. At the very moment I tumbled the hungry Teuton thrust his spoon into his food just under me, and I felt myself lifted swiftly into the air. Before I could realize my position, the man's wide-open mouth gaped before me. I felt his hot breath beating down upon me, saw his fang-like teeth, and shrieked aloud in a soul-grIPPING agony of terror when——

"He will be as sound as a dollar in a few days," said the blond-bearded surgeon. "A very easy and successful operation," he continued. "Put him to bed and keep him quiet. The ether may leave a slight headache, but otherwise he's as good as new."

I saw my wife's brightening face bending above me. "Oh, Bob! I'm *so* glad it's all over," she exclaimed, with a little whimper in her voice.

"So am I, girlic," I replied feebly. "I wouldn't go through another such experience for twenty troublesome vermiform appendixes."



"I FELT HIS HOT BREATH AND SAW HIS FANG-LIKE TEETH!"